

Wednesday April 15 1998

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The Guardian

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INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Is Mr Galloway a one-man Comintern?

Gorgeous George: Labour's rebel with a heart

G2 With European weather



Here comes the son

Sean Lennon: did the US government kill my father?

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Environment

The road to destruction

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Teachers demand hours cut

John Carvel
Education Editor

B RITAIN'S biggest teaching union yesterday delivered a slap in the face to David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, when it called for extensive industrial action to achieve the equivalent of four days of classroom teaching a week.

The National Union of Teachers' conference in Blackpool defied the advice of its leadership and voted by a narrow majority for a week of protest action in the autumn.

This could include refusal to teach classes with more than 30 pupils, no cover for absent colleagues and no more than one after-school staff meeting. Teachers may also take a full one-hour lunch break every day and limit their week to 35 hours.

The decision cannot be implemented without the support of at least 90,000 of the union's 150,000 members in a ballot. Moderate members of the executive said such support would not be forthcoming. The conference vote was a rebuff to Mr Blunkett's impassioned appeal on Monday for teachers to abandon their victim mentality and become partners in his campaign for higher standards.

The result was announced in the closing minutes of the conference after an address by Doug McAvoy, the general secretary, calling for "constructive engagement" with a popular government to achieve change by force of argument and solid research. "This is not a government to be swayed or shifted or deflected by the stamping of feet in Blackpool," he warned.

But most delegates supported a campaign to promote a national teachers' contract, including an 11-point manifesto for improving conditions of employment. It would give teachers the right to spend 20 per cent of the working week out of the

Teachers' demands

- One day a week out of the classroom marking, preparing lessons and form-filling.
- Closures of no more than 30.
- No covering for absent colleagues.
- A one-hour lunch break.
- No more than one after-school lesson a week.
- A 35-hour week.



Austin

OLD LEFTY NEVER KEEPS YOU IN AFTER-SCHOOL.

classroom on marking, preparation of lessons and administration. This would be equivalent to a day a week, although it would usually be spread out. Staff in their first year of teaching would get the equivalent of two days a week.

Other demands include mandatory limits on class sizes, breaks after teaching for two hours, payment for extra duties and permanent contracts for all staff.

The conference instructed its executive to organise a National Contract Week in the autumn term to draw maximum attention to these demands, first agreed by the 1997 conference. Teachers would choose the form of industrial action most appropriate to their school.

Moderate members of the executive supported the demands, but quarrelled with the tactics. "An action not

supported by the members will give the wrong message to the Government and local education authorities about our determination as a union to achieve a new contract for teachers," said Jerry Glazier, an Essex teacher who heads the salaries committee.

But Will Reese, a Coventry teacher on the executive of the left-wing Socialist Teachers Alliance, said the week of action would put pressure on the Government by drawing attention to teachers' excessive workload. "That is not threatening the life chances of children. It is defending the education service."

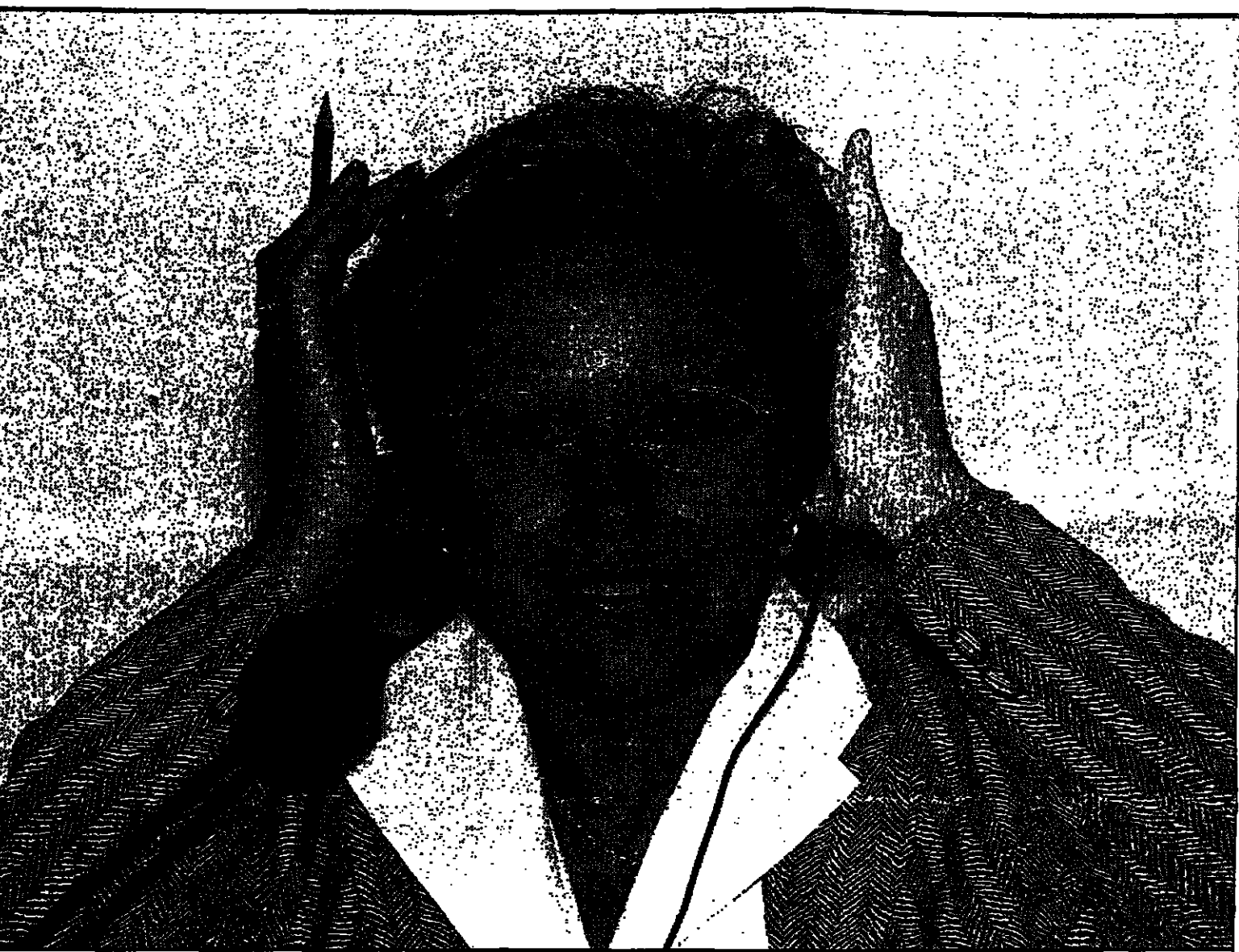
After the conference, Mr McAvoy said he would try to persuade the Government that school standards would not improve if teachers were so stressed by overwork that they became ill. "Teachers need the protection of a national contract to achieve our common aims."

But industrial action would disrupt pupils' education. "Children might have to be sent home. That would not ensure teachers had the support of parents or the public. It would require a substantial campaign to win that support."

In his annual address, Mr McAvoy accepted Mr Blunkett's call for a social partnership. "We must support David Blunkett in his fight for education during the next spending round."

But the union was not in the Government's pocket. Ministers "made the fundamental mistake of working up a moral panic about falling teachers to project a tough and uncompromising image." They had used the profession as a punch bag. It was being scapegoated for the ills of society. "Teachers do not understand such an approach from a Labour government. For those considering their career paths, it does nothing to persuade them that attitudes to teaching had changed." The Government should "pay teachers the salaries which recognise that without teachers there is no education, education, education."

No World Cup ticket? Come and get stuck into French culture instead



French tourism minister Michelle Demessine during a London news conference at which she issued her open invitation

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEPHENS

John Duncan
Sports Correspondent

THE Home Office's £1 million TV campaign urging football fans without tickets not to travel to France for the World Cup was in tatters yesterday after a French government minister came to London to tell England fans they should ignore it.

"Outside the football stadiums France is celebrating and we want as many people as possible to take part in that," said the French tourism minister Michelle Demessine yesterday when discussing her government's Bonjour 98 campaign.

"People can come without having to go to the match as there will be the

atmosphere of the World Cup, the atmosphere of the celebrations. I think that British people like those who now just come over for the day can come and enjoy the atmosphere in the towns hosting the World Cup where there will be lots of events going on not associated with the World Cup."

But that invitation flies in the face of an expensive Home Office campaign — "No ticket, don't travel" — which the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, had said was supported by the French government. "Both we and the Interior Ministry are saying the same thing," said a Home Office spokesman yesterday. "It is not a good idea to travel to France and try to get into a match. Ticket-touting laws

in France are very stringent and you could get into a lot of trouble."

However, Mr Straw's counterpart in France is denying this was ever his official policy. "Mr Chevènement has given no advice to fans about not travelling without tickets," said a French Interior Ministry spokesman yesterday.

MPs yesterday rounded on Mlle Demessine. Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, said: "This is a case of the perfidious French. What this French minister says is completely irresponsible."

But the Football Supporters' Association said a warm welcome from the French would discourage

hooliganism. "I do not think there is anything wrong with going to enjoy the tournament as long as you do not expect to get into games without a ticket or buy one out there," said the FSA's Adam Brown.

There are still fears of a large black market in World Cup tickets because

of the small number of seats allocated to participating nations — a total of 9,128 tickets for all England's group matches have been made available to the Football Association for England fans. Only England Travel Club members who made the journey to turn to page 2, column 1

Space invaders: 1,514 crickets, 135 snails, 7 homo sapiens

Crowded Columbia's shuttle turns into a tale of mice and men

Merlin Kettle in Washington

IT SOUNDS like someone's idea of the ultimate phobia test: two weeks in a tin box in the company of 18 mice, 152 rats and literally hundreds of other assorted creepy crawlies — with absolutely no chance of escape.

Yet this is the nerve-jangling prospect which awaits the seven-man crew of the Columbia space shuttle after they blast off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida tomorrow afternoon.

Animals paved the way in the early days of space travel, when monkeys and dogs orbited the earth to see if it was safe for humans to follow. But since Yuri Gagarin led the

way for homo sapiens in 1961, humans have had space pretty much to themselves.

Not any more. Indeed not since Noah's Ark have human beings embarked on such an awesome journey in the company of as many other species as Commander Richard Searfoss and his crew will do when they begin their 16-day mission.

Joining them for the ride are the rats and the mice, many of them pregnant, along with 1,514 crickets, 135 snails, and 223 assorted fish.

And as if Columbia's astronauts will not have enough on their minds as they hurtle around the globe, they will be expected to handle and observe their companions several times every day as part of



Space, the final frontier for snails and other creepy crawlies

the mission's research programme. The animals and insects are being sent into space so that NASA scientists can test how their nervous systems are af-

ected by weightlessness. The mother mice, each of which will be in a different stage of pregnancy, have to be injected every two hours with "markers" that will be ab-

sorbed by their fetuses at each stage of cell reproduction. Like the mice, the crickets will aid researchers in the effects of microgravity. And, like the astronauts, the insects were selected only after an exhaustive elimination process. Scientists sorted through 10,000 crickets on Monday, selecting 824 babies at three distinct ages and 690 eggs which will cross the final frontier in a sealed incubator.

Just like their human companions, the crickets will not have an easy flight. Crickets have been selected for the trip because they are exceptionally sensitive to gravity and motion.

Nasa hopes that their reaction will help to pinpoint the effects of weightlessness on such conditions as insomnia, blood pressure problems and motion sickness, all of which have troubled astronauts in

the past. Nasa says the data could also be of use to sufferers from leukaemia and Parkinson's disease.

Columbia, which is the oldest of Nasa's four space shuttles, is scheduled to blast off from its launch pad at 6.19pm GMT tomorrow. Launch controllers have reported no technical problems with the \$2 billion reusable spaceship since the countdown clocks began ticking in the early hours of Monday.

"I can personally guarantee you that there will be some great clinical benefits for people back on earth," Commander Searfoss told reporters yesterday.

Fellow astronaut Dave Williams echoed his leader's optimism. "There's something in this mission for everyone," he said. Except, perhaps, for whoever has to clean out the cages.

Prague Writers' Festival 1998

The 8th Prague Writers' Festival presents a selection of fine authors from the Czech Republic and around the world. Meet them at the Franz Kafka Centre, Old Town Square, at 7 pm from 20 to 25 April.

Monday 20 April Lawrence Ferlinghetti Antigone Kefala Michael March Josef Topol	City Lights USA Australia USA Czech Republic
Tuesday 21 April Martin Amis Brian Patten Per Olov Enquist Isabel Fonseca	British Day Great Britain Great Britain Sweden USA
Wednesday 22 April Pedro Tamen Mário Souza Mia Couto Germano Almeida Tahar Ben Jelloun Miroslav Holub	Portuguese-Language Day Portugal Brazil Mozambique Cape Verde Morocco Czech Republic
Thursday 23 April Lilian Fashingher Robert Menasse Claudio Magris Ludvík Vaculík	Austrian Day Austria Austria Italy Czech Republic
Friday 24 April Robert Creeley John Banville Dante Mariani Rhea Galanaki Mila Haugová Viera Prokešová Daniela Fischerová	For Bohumil Hrabal USA Ireland Italy Greece Slovakia Czech Republic
Saturday 25 April Ryszard Krynicky Andrzej Szczypiorski György Petri	Polish Day Poland Poland Hungary

The Festival is dedicated to Bohumil Hrabal. Patron: the City of Prague.

For further details, please contact the Prague Writers' Festival Foundation, Staroměstské nám. 22, Prague 1 tel/fax + 420 2 24 21 30 30

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Britain	World News	Analysis	Sport
<p>Britain's economy is expected to grow by 2.5 per cent this year, according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.</p>	<p>The United Nations has called for a ceasefire in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.</p>	<p>The British government has announced that it will increase the minimum wage to £3.60 an hour from next April.</p>	<p>The British Open golf tournament is set to be won by Paul Lawrie, a Scottish professional.</p>

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Old and new South Africa at odds



Stubborn Botha in showdown with truth body

Alex Duval Smith in George, Western Cape

LEGAL wrangling between the unrepentant former apartheid-era president, P. W. Botha, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was last night escalating into a final showdown between the old and the new South Africa.

Lawyers for both sides entered a second night of talks after the magistrate at George regional court opened and adjourned until this morning the case over Mr Botha's refusal to testify before the commission.

Lawyers said the talks were as much a face-saving operation for the commission as for the Great Crocodile, as the authoritarian former president, aged 82, is known.

After the adjournment Archbishop Tutu said: "It is imperative that people realise that the commission was set up to do very important work for the healing of our nation. I hope Mr Botha will participate in the process of reconciliation."

At issue is whether Mr Botha will back down on his refusal to appear in person before the commission, which he claims is carrying out a witch-hunt against whites.

Such an arrangement would jeopardise the credibility of the commission since Mr Botha, who led South Africa from 1978 until 1989, is its star witness. The commission began hearing the testimonies of hundreds of subjects of apartheid in April 1996.

The commission, which has promised to drop the contempt case against Mr Botha if he agrees to appear — has so far obtained only written answers from him, despite repeated personal pleas by Archbishop Tutu and President Nelson Mandela.

If it fails to persuade him to testify by this morning's deadline of 8am, the case against Mr Botha is in danger of becoming a trial of the commission, already accused by some whites of being biased.

If the case proceeds and Mr Botha is found guilty of contempt and jailed, he could win the status of a white martyr.

The commission wants to question Mr Botha about his headline State Security Council, which implemented emergency rule in the 1980s. It also wants information about his role in cross-border raids into neighbouring countries.

President Mandela led a chorus of outrage yesterday over the killing of a black infant by a white farmer.

Nicholas Steyn was charged with murder and attempted murder for allegedly firing his handgun at Francis Dlamini, aged 11, as she carried her cousin, Angelina Zwane, through the farmer's field on Saturday. The baby died of a gunshot wound to the head.

Leader comment, page 9



Protesters in George yesterday vent anger against former president P. W. Botha (above left, leaving court). He refuses to testify before South Africa's truth commission, alleging a 'witch-hunt' against whites. MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: PETER ANDREWS

Poorest nations get debt hope

Alex Brummer in Washington

BRITAIN'S bold target of putting the world's poorest countries on track for debt relief by the year 2000 is now within reach, according to the President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn.

After the recent decision to grant some \$2.5 billion of debt relief to Mozambique, there was now a real chance that some 15 or 16 of the world's poorest countries would qualify for debt relief by the year 2000, he said in an interview in Washington.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, with the support of the Commonwealth, has been pressing the case for speeding the process of debt relief by the millennium.

Mr Wolfensohn said he thought the bank had done a "good job in getting a deal for Mozambique", one of Africa's poorest countries, "within two years of establishing the concept". He said that with support from bilateral donors like Britain, which has been particularly supportive "some 15 to 16 countries will qualify for relief by 2000".

Uganda will become the first country to receive relief on up to 85 per cent of its debt — some \$350 million — on April 18. Similar debt relief has now also been approved for Guyana and Cote d'Ivoire, with Mozambique the most tricky case so far now on its way to approval.

As a result of the scheme, inaugurated by Mr Wolfensohn in 1996, some \$4 billion of debt has so far been removed from the balance sheets of the poorest countries. But this remains a long way short of the moral

target of total debt relief by the "Jubilee year" of 2000, being co-ordinated by churches and aid groups worldwide.

Last autumn, Mr Wolfensohn was sceptical as to whether the target of bringing 15 to 16 countries to a decision point on debt relief by the year 2000 was possible, given the foot dragging by some industrial countries whose response he still regards as unsatisfactory.

Mr Wolfensohn expressed disappointment that whereas the bank and the International Monetary Fund had been willing to forgive up to 90 per cent of the debts of Mozambique, bilateral debtors refused to go that far. "We asked them to go to 80 per cent for Mozambique," Mr Wolfensohn said, "but when the hat was passed around the money was not there."

Mr Wolfensohn is also seeking to stimulate international interest in a new round of funding for the International Development Association, the main supplier of concessional foreign assistance to the same group of poorest countries — mainly in Africa and Central America. The bank is seeking to create a fund of up to \$2 billion to ensure that aid continues to flow to these poor countries before and after the millennium.

Mr Wolfensohn has undertaken to find half the cash required from the bank's own resources and money repaid by recipient countries, but he fears that he faces an uphill struggle in persuading the industrial countries to meet their obligations.

Mr Wolfensohn also said the bank had a responsibility to address the severe social inequalities in Asia which have arisen as a result of the financial crisis in the region.

Health fears mar launch of weight-loss drug

Sarah Besley Health Correspondent

A REVOLUTIONARY weight-loss drug may be launched in the UK this year, even though the Food and Drugs Administration in the United States is agonising over whether to allow its use because of breast cancer fears.

Xenical is the first drug to fight obesity by preventing the gut from processing fat in food. About a third passes straight through the body. But what sounds like

a dieter's dream is not a licence to eat cream cakes and burgers. The pills will be strictly for the dangerously overweight and have nasty side-effects that get worse the more fat is consumed.

Roche, the chemical giant which is testing Xenical, is hoping it will make more than \$1 billion a year in the United States where about a third of the population and a fifth of all children are obese.

But the weight-loss arena is fraught with difficulties. Last September, the world's two best-selling slimming

drugs, Redux and Pondimin, were withdrawn from the market because of safety problems. A study showed that 32 per cent of 291 patients taking Redux had faulty heart-valves — a higher proportion than would be expected even due to chance. Those drugs worked by tricking the brain into believing the stomach was satisfactorily full.

Roche had high hopes of Xenical until it was submitted for approval to the FDA. Last May, the administration approved the drug, but then suddenly

reversed its decision, out of concern that ten of the 4,000 patients in clinical trials had developed precancerous lesions of the breast.

Roche denies there is any problem, arguing that the increased numbers were due to chance and that no cancers had been found in animal studies. An advisory panel of the FDA was said to be deadlocked on the matter last month. The final decision is expected by mid-May.

In the meantime, the European licence application has had more success.

The Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products has made favourable noises about Xenical, indicating that it may get approval within four months. It would take a few more months after that for the necessary agreements to be reached to sell the drug in the UK.

Trials showed that Xenical could cut about 600 calories a day. The average patient lost 10 kilos (more than 1.5 stones) over a year.

But the effects of the drug are unpleasant, if not humiliating. The rejected fat

is excreted, causing diarrhoea which gets worse the more fat is consumed — something of an incentive in itself to cut down. It is possible that Xenical will only be prescribed by hospitals, to try to prevent a black market in the pills at slimming clinics, and will be recommended only for use in conjunction with a low-fat diet and exercise.

No Cup ticket? Come and get stuck into French culture

continued from page 1

Norway, Moldova and Georgia in the qualifying tournament are guaranteed tickets for all games.

That leaves up to 20,000 members of the Travel Club with tickets for one or no games, as well as an estimated 20,000 occasional England fans interested in travelling. With French citizens holding up to four tickets each there are fears that a

black market in tickets will break down segregation and lead to violence in the stadiums.

The last tickets for the World Cup will go on sale next Wednesday. A telephone hotline is being set up for EU citizens to buy the remaining 110,000 tickets.

Lines will open at 8am French time on April 22. The number will be released this Friday.

Where male ego and buffalo roam

Review

Joanna Coles

Paul Bunyan

Lincoln Center, New York

IT IS frankly absurd that there is still no recording of Benjamin Britten's Paul Bunyan available on CD. For this "choral opera" as the composer referred to it, with libretto by W. H. Auden, is a mini-masterpiece, as funny as it is bizarre and with tunes, yes tunes, as haunting as the legend of Bunyan himself.

You would be pushed to find a better blues number than the superb Quartet Of The Deafened. "The waters of grief went over my soul... There's always a sorrow can get you down, all the world's a whiskey can never drown."

Nevertheless, Bunyan is a difficult piece to stage, the two acts of this picturesque uneven and the whole piece is punctuated by long poetic passages and clumsily narrated by folk songs, which makes the New York City Opera's production all the more impressive.

Director Mark Lamos and set designer Paul Steinberg have done a fabulous job and the curtain opens to a chorus, each clasping a small pine tree and rhythmically rocking — Psycho-like — on blue chairs, all dressed as if they had walked straight out of Grant Wood's American Gothic.

Written in 1939, when both

Britten and Auden had fled Europe to America, Bunyan is not only a celebration of man's ability to wrestle with the landscape but also a re-examination of male stereotypes. The action takes place in a lumber camp, where the only female company comprises three cats and an orphan. Slim, the cowboy who saunters on stage may come "from open spaces and endless grass, where the shadows of cloud and blue pass" but he is doomed to "hunt my shadow, and the self I lack".

It is, however, America's swift move to the industrial era which really fuels the tale. The staging forest demands to know "How can pines or grass or sage, understand the modern age?" While the Cook's Daet — "The Best People are crazy about soups; Beans are all the rage among the higher income groups," is a lovely satire on advertising.

Fifty years on and the irony of the libretto is just as sharp. In charge of the loggers, Jimmy Ingleheart is secretly nursing his dream of writing a novel "with which Tolstoy couldn't compete. And how all of the critics would grovel! But I guess a guy gotta eat."

Conscious after it premiered at Columbia University, that it needed more work, Auden and Britten squabbled before they could revise it together. Later, when back in England, Britten dug it out again, was surprised by how much he still liked it. One feels he would approve of the NYCO's lively, bright production.

Top Italian policeman 'pocketed kidnap cash'

John Hooper in Rome

IN A case that has astonished even sleaze-glutted Italians, one of their country's most senior policemen was yesterday arrested and jailed on suspicion of profiting from the kidnapping of a friend.

General Francesco Delfino is among the most highly decorated and widely respected officers in the paramilitary Carabinieri. He played a key role in the capture five years ago of the Sicilian Mafia's capo di tutti i capi, Salvatore Riina. Until a few days ago, he was the Carabinieri's head of training.

Prosecutors in the northern town of Brescia believe the general, aged 60, pocketed at least part of a billion-lire (\$335,000) payment for finding a go-between to negotiate the release of a kidnapped businessman. Gen Delfino has protested his innocence, telling the newspaper La Stampa that he is the victim of "unfair accusations".

He added: "I can provide abundantly plausible explanations for everything." Everything, in his case, will include two overnight bags used to pay the ransom which were found last week during a search of the general's house. The search also revealed five wall safes containing 30 million lire (almost £10,000) and \$5,000 (\$2,000) in cash. At least one of the banknotes came from the same series that had been used to pay the ransom.



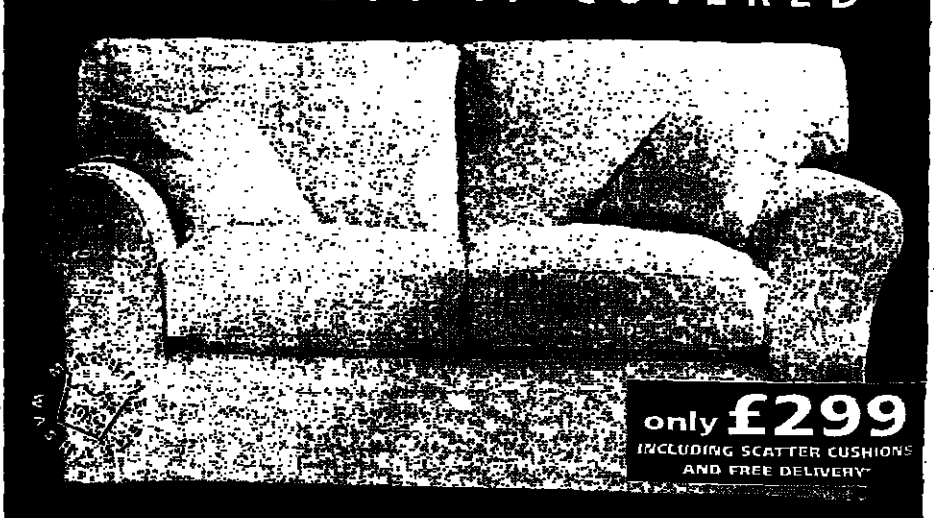
The arrested Francesco Delfino: 'I can explain everything'

The kidnap victim, Giuseppe Soffiantini, was set free in February after eight months in captivity. His family paid 5 billion lire (£1.7 million).

Mr Soffiantini became acquainted with the general when, as a young lieutenant, he was put in charge of a Carabinieri detachment in a village near Brescia. Mr Soffiantini said yesterday he was "very upset" by the latest development.

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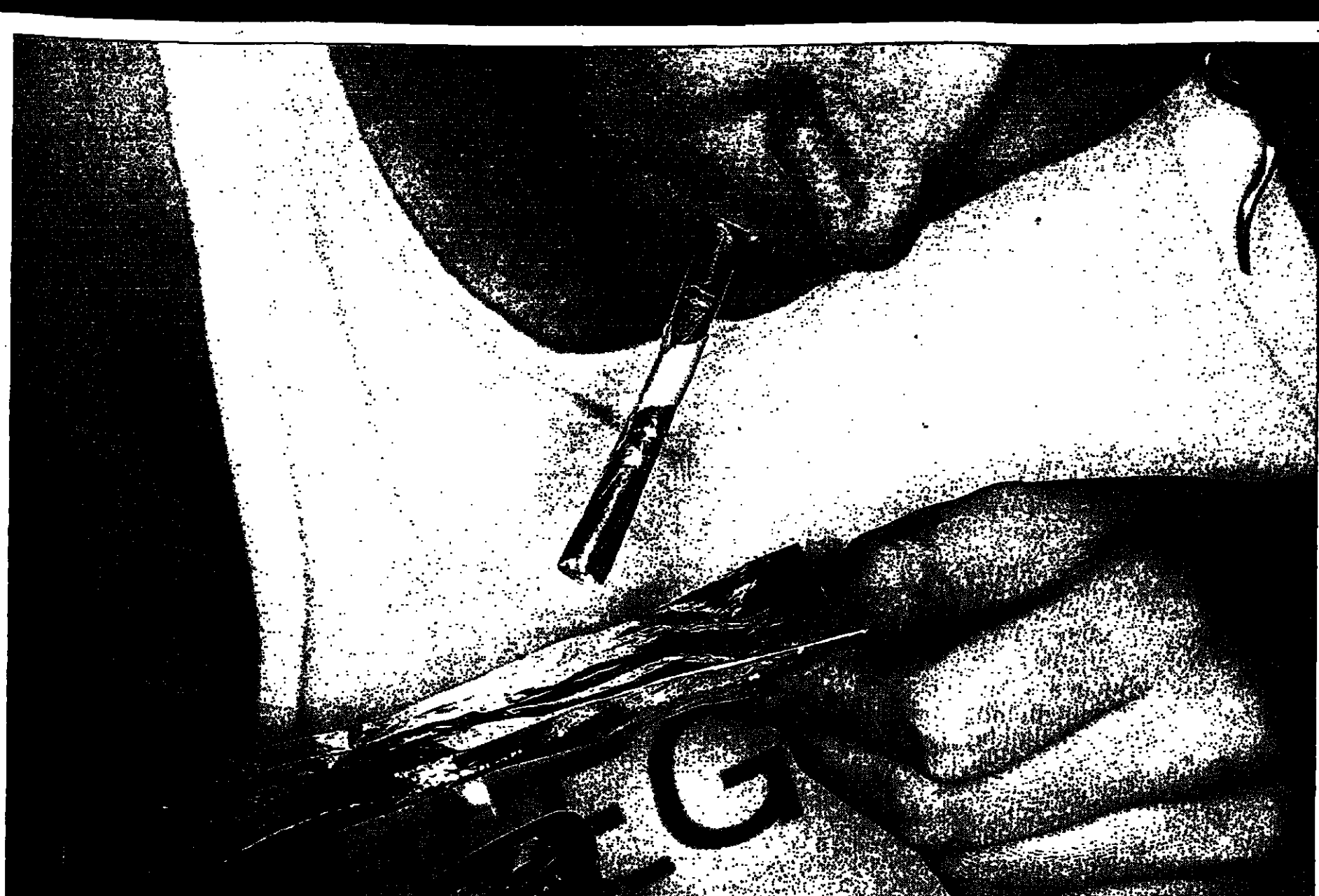
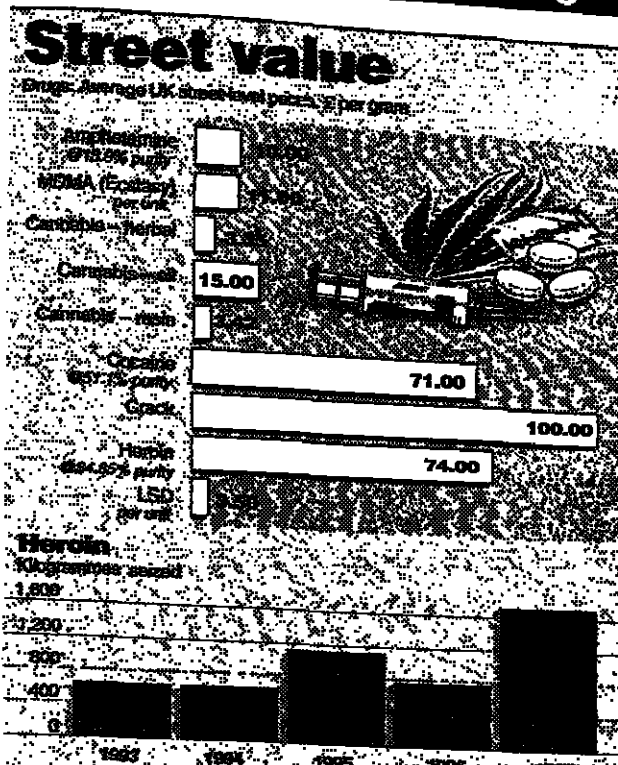
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Drugs business booming



More young people are smoking heroin after buying it in 'wraps' costing as little as £2, according to the Government's drugs co-ordinator

Young take to heroin for price of a pint

Customs seizures up 135pc in a year

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

HEROIN has become a drug of choice for many young people and can be bought for as little as a pint of beer, it was claimed yesterday. Some dealers may be selling the drug at a loss to attract new users, it was suggested in the wake of the heroin seizures by Customs.

Keith Hellawell, the Government's recently appointed drugs coordinator, said heroin was becoming the "drug of first choice" for an increasing number of young people.

While there were no registered heroin addicts, he be-

Heved the true figure was up to four times that number.

Mr. Hellawell, formerly the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, said heroin addicts were "the most dangerous and numerous quantities of crime; a recent study had shown that 700 heroin addicts had committed 70,000 crimes in a three-month period."

"The use of heroin by people were being sold for as little as \$2 — around the price of a pint of beer — and that young people were smoking rather than injecting the drug. He believed dealers were selling the wraps as a "loss leader" because they knew that a heroin user would become a regular customer.

"The problem has gone through the social classes and genera-

bons," said Mr Kellawell. Users included not only the young, dispersed in city centres but "young rich kids in the suburbs". He said dealers were now able to tell potential users that they could avoid the risks of Aids and hepatitis by smoking rather than injecting.

Dick Kellawell, the Customs and Excise national investigation service chief, said seizures of heroin had soared in the past year, from £39 million worth of the drug in 1996 to £145 million in 1997, an increase of 136 per cent.

The majority of heroin seized, around 80 per cent, has come from Turkey, produced from opium grown in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It arrived in the United Kingdom having crossed around six borders, he said, via the Balkan route of Bulgaria, Romania, Austria and Germany and through the Benelux countries to Britain.

Mr Kellawell said the price of heroin in the UK was higher than on the continent

because of the greater possibility of detection here. A kilogram of heroin costs \$200 in Pakistan, \$7,000 in Turkey, \$15,300 in the Netherlands and \$24,000 in the United Kingdom — which translated into £72,000 at street level.

Trafficers were prepared to try any method to import the drug, said Mr Kellaway. About 20 kilos of the drug had been found under the carpeting of two speedboats imported by container and shipped from Izmir in Turkey to Felixstowe. Another 450 kilos had been hidden in a consignment of towelling bathrobes.

Other seizures of note were:

- Cocaine: More than two tonnes worth \$206 million seized, an increase on the 1996 figure of 1,157 kilos, worth £127 million. An increasing amount had come to Britain via other European countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, France and Belgium.
- The most popular method of importing continues to be in baggage, of which there were 275 seizures

amounting to 800 kilos. Crack cocaine was also on the increase.

Cannabis: At nearly 77 tonnes (23 herbal, 54 resin), cannabis seizures increased slightly on the 76 tonnes seized the previous year. Value of seizures had risen from £172 million to £184 million. "The source countries are headed by Colombia and Morocco," says the report. "Afghanistan and Pakistan have been joined by Cambodia."

Ecstasy: Seizures were down from 485 kilos (£22m) to 394 kilos (£17m).

Mike Goodman, director of Release, the drugs advice agency, said: "We have noticed a worrying increase in sales from young people about heroin but it is still a very small proportion of drug users."

Anna Bradley, of the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence, said there was no question that heroin was now more generally available.

Leader comment, page 8
Inside Story, G2, pages 8 and 9

'When you take it you go into your own world. You don't care a toss about anybody else . . . It amazes me how much more available it is now.'

Tom, aged 24, is a publishing assistant.

"I **N THE** past my friends and I had tried all the usual drugs: hash, E, coke. I knew one or two of my mates had tried harder stuff, but I was never really interested because I just wanted to take stuff to go out and bounce about on.

"Then a year ago, one of my mates offered me some smack. I've no idea where he got it. I said 'no way' because I knew it was the hardest thing as far as drugs were concerned. But he said we could smoke a little bit of it and there wouldn't be a problem. The trouble only started if you injected, he said.

"It was a great hit. Completely different from anything I had tried before. I was having a tough time at work and all that just slipped away.

"It's not a sociable drug. When you take it you go into your own world. You don't care a toss about anybody else.

"Over the next three or four weeks, I probably only used gear another couple of times at most, but I was smoking a little bit more each time. Looking back, I suppose I was addicted

after the first couple of months but it felt cool and under control.

"I think that I have a serious problem and I'm going to go through detox. I've managed to just about hold everything together but I don't want to get to the stage where I'm stealing to pay for gear.

"It amazes me how much money was made in New Orleans and how cheap it is now. Places. Even a year ago nobody would use it because it was expensive and had bad connotations. Now loads of my friends use it.

"I think that's the big difference now, from when I was at school and being shown all these films about kids dropping dead the minute they go near drugs. It's part of the culture now. People say that if cocaine and ecstasy were the drugs of the 1980s and early 1990s, then heroin is the drug for the millennium."

Interview by Stuart Millar

Parties face crisis on donations

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

POLITICAL parties face financial crisis over plans to lay down strict rules to implement Labour's promised ban on foreign donations.

Submissions from parties to the inquiry into political funding by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, headed by Lord Neill, have alarmed the politicians of Labour's manifesto pledge.

Tax exiles, expatriates who have taken out foreign citizenship and citizens of the European Union who have not registered their vote in the last elections could find themselves prohibited from donating.

ing any cash when the inquiry, starting today at Westminster's Central Hall, reports in September.

Lord Nell could get some help from the donors like Paula Eccleston, the Formula One racing chief, who is still considering whether to give evidence, about how Labour and the Tory party, together, from his £1 million donations.

The strongest opposition has come from the Scottish National Party (SNP) whose most prominent member is Sir Ian Davidson, a former Tory MP and a member of the House of Commons, who lives in Marbella, Spain.

Another tax exile who will be affected is the deputy treasurer of the Conservative Party, Michael Ashcroft, a Belize citizen, who lives in Florida.

The SNP has also warned that thousands of emigrants to the United States will be stopped from contributing to parties because they have been blacklisted.

The Social Democratic Labour Party, which receives much of its funding from the Republic of Ireland, could be caught by the same net.

Washington, Ottawa, Toronto, Quebec, Bonn and Stockholm to see how other countries regulate donations to political parties, and how they can be enforced, have been left with more problems than solutions.

None of the four countries really trading into British territory. The Europeans have too much of a tradition of state funding. The United

States system simply does not work because strict laws restricting donations are easily bypassed.

In Quebec, donor giving has soared to 520 (200 Canadian dollars) has their name and address made public. Plans to limit corporate donations and large individual donations are also being put forward. Decisions to force disclosures of donations from wealthy individuals and companies can also be the end of the donation altogether.

Complementing Labour's pledge "to reform party funding to end sleaze" will not be easy. Lord Nield admits as much. He says the sleaze pledge in a manifesto "...but it is far more complicated in reality," he said.

Havel critically ill after collapsing

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE Czech leader, Václav Havel, underwent emergency surgery last night after being rushed into an Innsbruck clinic with a life-threatening perforated intestine.

Mr Havel, aged 51 — president, playwright and hero of the 1989 anti-communist revolution — was spending Easter in the Austrian Alps when he collapsed yesterday.

He was taken by helicopter to the university clinic in Innsbruck while his personal doctor was on his way to the hospital.

"Havel is in a very serious condition," Professor Ernst Bodner, the hospital's chief surgeon, said. "He is criti-

cally ill and must be operated on as an emergency."

Mr Havel has been dogged by ill-health for two years. But his determination to finish the drive by mounting instability in the Czech Republic, pushed him to seek a second term, which he secured three months ago. He has since then been a chain smoker until comparatively recently, lost half a lung in late 1996 when he was operated on for lung cancer. He has also contracted pneumonia, which almost killed him.

Amid claims that doctors bungled his treatment and that fatalities in the Czech Republic were linked to his treatment, Havel took months to recover and in the past year has suffered repeated bronchitis and pneumonia.

Shortly after being re-elected president in January, he was back in hospital with breathing problems caused by a surgical wound that had opened up in his throat stemming from the lung cancer surgery.

Mr Havel played a key role in bringing down the centre-right government of Vaclav Klaus last year and installing a caretaker administration.

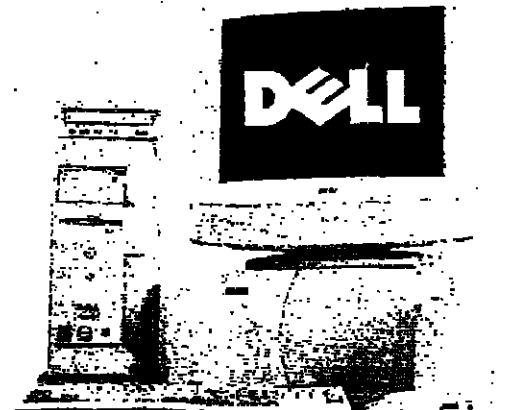
After years of stability that had earned the Czechs the enviable reputation of a post-communist world, the young republic was suddenly thrust into crisis.

Mr Havel has just called early elections and is seen as a stabilising figure at a time of uncertainty.

Fairplay of the philosopher king, page 6



Vaclav Havel: Czech leader dogged by ill-health

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Double standards claim over child

'We are not against a single child receiving treatment, but we also want the Government to take action which will solve the real problem — that of Saddam Hussein's regime — rather than co-operate with public relations stunts organised by the Iraqi government'

Nabeel Musawi, for the Iraqi National Congress



Leukaemia sufferer Mariam Hamza, for whom a Labour MP has arranged treatment in Scotland and the Government has speeded her visa application

Row over Iraqi mercy mission

Lawrence Donegan

AN IRAQI girl due to arrive in Britain for hospital treatment was at the centre of a political row last night as opponents of Saddam Hussein's regime accused the Foreign Office of double standards by arranging an entry visa for her.

Four-year-old Mariam Hamza, who has leukaemia, is expected to arrive in Glasgow this week to be treated at the city's Yorkhill hospital. She was in a Baghdad hospital last night awaiting United Nations clearance for an air ambulance flight to take her out of the country.

Her visit has been arranged by the Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin, George Galloway, who was made aware of her condition during a visit to a Baghdad hospital last month.

Mr Galloway, a longstanding opponent of UN sanctions against Iraq, and organiser of the Commons Emergency Committee on Iraq, has arranged for Mariam to be admitted to Yorkhill's Schofield Unit, a leading facility for the treatment of childhood cancers.

It emerged this week that the Government had speeded up a visa request for the girl, while the Foreign Office successfully lobbied the UN sanc-

tions committee to have its "no fly" ban lifted temporarily to allow the air ambulance to leave Iraq airspace.

Mr Galloway welcomed the Government's "humanitarian approach", but Iraqi opposition groups claimed both he and the Foreign Office had fallen victim to a "PR stunt" by Saddam Hussein.

Nabeel Musawi, for the main anti-Saddam organisation, the Iraqi National Congress, said thousands of children in Iraq were suffering from leukaemia as a direct result of Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons against his own people.

While welcoming the granting of a visa to this one child,

he said: "We are compiling a list of other children who are ill — will the Foreign Office grant visas to all of them?"

"We are not against a single child receiving treatment, but we also want the Government to take action to solve the real problem — that of Saddam Hussein's regime — rather than co-operate with public relations stunts organised by the Iraqi government."

Speaking from Baghdad, Mr Galloway dismissed suggestions that helping the girl would be a propaganda coup for Iraq. "I don't see it that way. The facts are that if she doesn't get this treatment in Britain she will die because of the cumulative effects of sanc-

tions over the last 74 years on the Iraqi health service, which is close to collapse."

He reiterated his call for the UN to lift sanctions against Iraq which, he said, could be brought to an end if people saw that "the Iraqis are real people who have real children, that they are not demons or monsters."

The cost of flying the girl out of Iraq has been met by a British businessman, while the MP has set up a fund to pay for her private treatment at the hospital, which could cost £40,000.

But Ann Clywd MP, chair of the anti-Saddam Campaign for Democratic Rights in Iraq, echoed criticism of the For-

eign Office's intervention. She said: "A few weeks ago Britain was preparing to go to war against Iraq. We all sympathise with this one particular child but sanctions are still in place and the implications of making exceptions are enormous — we can't say on the one hand that Iraq is lying about its chemical weapons programme, and then turn round and say we are prepared to lift sanctions for one child."

"There are thousands of children suffering from leukaemia in Iraq and the cause of their suffering is Saddam Hussein's regime."

Mr Hodgson was commenting on the Guardian's disclosure yesterday that preliminary talks had been held between the Post Office and Littlewoods, the pools operator, about mounting a bid to run the lottery in 2001.

The idea has the backing of Alan Johnson, Labour MP for Hull West and Hessle, and the former leader of the Union of Communication Workers.

Such a link is also thought to be attractive to both the

about expanding the role of the Post Office.

Martin O'Neill, Labour chairman of the trade and industry committee, yesterday described the Post Office's bid to run the lottery as "forward thinking of a very credible kind."

He added: "It would also fit with plans to create a nationwide computer network by 1999 in the Post Office to handle automated benefit payments. This would mean a bid for the lottery franchise by 2001 a real possibility."

The Post Office and Littlewoods were yesterday cautious about making any statement about a future bid. Camelot was also keeping its head down.

A spokeswoman for Camelot confirmed it intended to bid for a new franchise in 2001 but described bids by rivals as "speculation at the moment."

Post Office prepared to open longer for lottery

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

THE Post Office bid to run the National Lottery with Littlewoods pools would offer the public an extra bonus opening day and early evening opening of selected offices — it was disclosed yesterday.

Trade unions are prepared to discuss flexible working with the Post Office to cope with the extra hours of handling the huge number of lottery sales, Derek Hodgson, joint general secretary of the Union of Communication Workers, said yesterday.

He said the union had already held discussions with the Post Office about a bid for the National Lottery — and bidding for other business connected with the nation's most popular gamble.

"Not only could the Post Office run the lottery bringing it back to an organisation the public know and trust — but they could also offer bulk deliveries of scratchcards and set up a national distribution network to supply lottery cards," he said.

"We would certainly be prepared to discuss with them opening offices later in the evenings and seven day opening to bring us more into line with our competitors — such as supermarkets."

Such a move would make it easier for the public to get other services provided by the Post Office — such as TV licences, car tax, stamps and the use of National Savings accounts.

Mr Hodgson was commenting on the Guardian's disclosure yesterday that preliminary talks had been held between the Post Office and Littlewoods, the pools operator, about mounting a bid to run the lottery in 2001.

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Literary drums beat for Tarzan

Dan Glaister on Heseltine's hopes that his memoirs will turn a publishing tide

THE title says it all: Hezra. That single word sums up the career of the man who would be, but never quite was, one of the great Tory prime ministers.

Instead, Michael Heseltine, former deputy prime minister and president of the Board of Trade, is to be the subject of what is possibly the last of the great Tory political memoirs. He will be glad the book is not to be called Tarzan.

Set for publication in 2000, Hezra will be written by veteran journalist Anthony Howard. After a hotly contested auction between publishers, rights to the book were bought by Hodder & Stoughton for what is understood to be more than £250,000.

The precise figure is unknown, but it is less than the £400,000 which HarperCollins paid John Major for his memoirs, a sum which included serialisation rights.

Hodder & Stoughton editor Roland Phillips said: "It will be headline-making stuff. It will be as frank and pull any punches."

Asked why the book would not be ready until 2000, Mr Phillips said: "He wants to really work at it and get it right. And there is some advantage to publishing after John Major and having the last word on that government."

In typically bashful mode, Mr Heseltine, aged 64, said: "The book will tell it as it happened. The birth of Haymarket, now one of Britain's leading private companies."

"The creation of a modern Britain. And, of course, 30 years at the forefront of British politics. I served in the governments of Ted Heath, Margaret Thatcher and John Major, which changed the assumptions and prospects of the British people."

The two men first came into contact when Mr Howard wrote a profile of Mr Heseltine 44 years ago for the Oxford student newspaper Isis.

The political memoir may be one of the last threatened areas of British life that Mr Heseltine swings in

to rescue. Following the debacle of books by Norman Fowler and Margaret Thatcher, it had been assumed that the days of former ministers' divine right to bore the reading public with the details of their time in office were numbered.

The period of change for the British people had brought with it a change of assumptions about the viability of publishing poor-selling political memoirs.

But Hezra could change all that. Coming in the wake of books by Chris Patten and David Mellor, Hezra's volume may even usher in a new golden age of political memoirs.

Guided by a flock of Margaret Thatcher's cabinet in 1986 over a rescue plan for Westland helicopters. Ten years earlier he seized the Mace at the end of a Commons vote. In 1986 he was first elected to Parliament, becoming a junior minister in the 1970 Heath government.

Under Margaret Thatcher, he was secretary of state for the environment, then defence, before walking out.

Under John Major, Mr Heseltine returned to the environment portfolio, even though Mr Major had been elected as the "Stop Heseltine" candidate. He moved to the Department of Trade and Industry, but his long-term political ambitions seemed to have been put on hold by a heart attack in 1993.

A year later he was busy undermining John Major's leadership. Following Mr Major's victory in the 1995 leadership election, Mr Heseltine became a deputy prime minister, and unofficially, minister for the Today programme.

A millionaire by the time he was 30, Mr Heseltine's life should make for interesting reading.

One final challenge, however, remains. One of Tarzan's final pet projects was the Millennium Dome. With publication set for 2000, he could be judged on the fate of that endeavour alone.

Spencer speaks of memorial 'trauma'

Luke Harding

EARL Spencer yesterday revealed how he had agonised over finding a final resting place for his sister, Diana, Princess of Wales.

In his first substantial interview since her death last summer, the earl said he had decided the princess should be buried "somewhere where I could take care of her."

He also said that an 18ft high urn is to be built on the island where Diana is buried at Althorp, the Spencer family home in Northamptonshire.

"I suppose we have all been surprised by the impact that

Diana's death had," he told the Northants Evening Telegraph, his local newspaper. "I found it very difficult at Diana's funeral in September to come to terms with the enormity of what had happened."

"I was very close to my sister — we grew up together, I and my family still feel her loss very deeply."

Lord Spencer said Diana's sons, Princes William and Harry, would be invited to view their mother's museum which is being built on the estate. The museum, housed in a converted Palladian stable block, is due to open to the public on July 1.

It will include film of Diana growing up. The earl described the process of editing

the film as a "traumatic task", adding: "Diana and I are together in almost every frame."

Prince William, aged 15, and 13-year-old Prince Harry were kept up to date with plans to commemorate their mother at Althorp. "I will be inviting them to see the work before it is finally complete," the earl said. "They may have suggestions, and if they say 'Mummy would have wanted this or that', I would like to be able to do something before the work is complete."

In the aftermath of the Paris car crash last August 31, Lord Spencer said, decisions regarding what to do with Diana's body had to be taken quickly. He was "uncomfort-

able" with the idea of her being cremated and was worried about security problems if Diana had been interred next to her father in the family crypt at St Mary's Church at Great Brington, Northants.

"One morning I woke and thought 'We'll bury her on the estate,'" he said. "I talked it over with a couple of other people and we went on from there."

The island has a simple temple which has been converted into a permanent memorial to Diana. It contains two marble slabs with inscriptions and a profile of Diana. One will bear a quotation from Diana, the other bears a remark from her brother's address at her funeral. The lo-

cation of her body is not marked.

"The joy of that place is its natural beauty, with its trees and plants. We are doing a lot of landscaping work in the park and around the temple and our personal memorial to Diana is transforming that site."

The museum will include rooms devoted to different aspects of her life: the Spencer family, Wife and Mother, the Westminster Abbey Funeral, and her charity work.

The earl said he did not want "some huge glass structure... portraying Diana as some sort of Monroe-style icon". Some 152,000 ticket holders are expected to visit the estate over the summer.

● The Queen is to help the Duchess of York buy a new £1 million home, it emerged yesterday.

The deal would enable the duchess and her daughters, princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, to move out of the Yorks' former marital home, Sunninghill Park in Berkshire.

The duchess was given £500,000 to buy herself a property as part of her 1996 divorce settlement. The Queen is now considering doubling the sum, it is understood, following negotiations between lawyers.

The duchess is expected to move in the autumn. Two five-bedroom homes are being considered in Winkfield, Berkshire.

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Dorothy Squires dies on magic note

John Eazard

THE mercurial singer Dorothy Squires died yesterday with the word "magic" on her lips, obstinately dreaming of a return to show business triumph.

Though she was 83, it was not an entirely idle threat. Ms Squires, whose career reached its peak in the early postwar years, was more famous later for her comebacks — as well as for litigation, money crises and marriage to the youthful Roger Moore.

In the 1970s, defying predictions, she filled the London Palladium and Carnegie Hall, New York, with one-woman shows she financed herself.

The pianist Russ Conway believes her last performance was singing her 1980s joint hit Say it with Flowers on TV in 1986, when she was nearly 70. "My God, she still had the power in her voice and lungs," he said. "She was one of the last glamorous, powerful stars that we had."

'She was the most wonderful person I have ever worked with'

Ms Squires died of cancer at Llanymyneir Hospital, Rhondda Cynon Taff, in south Wales, where she was born.

A friend, Michael Thornton, said she had replied "magic" after hearing a last phone message from Moore: "Take hold of her hand, give it a little squeeze and tell her I'm thinking of her."

They married in 1953, when she was 38 and Moore was 28. Their divorce in 1969 followed a long separation.

Ms Squires, who began as a crooner in Llanelli in the 1930s, was discovered by the pianist Charlie Kunz. Her chart hits included I'm Walking Behind You, For Once in My Life and My Way.

The saxophonist Johnnie Gray, who played in her band, said: "She was the most wonderful and generous person I have ever worked with."

"But she was very imperious. If anyone misbehaved she would sack them on the spot."

Obituary, page 10

Case against Gulf arms firm directors halted

David Pallister

MARGARET Beckett, the Trade and Industry Secretary, yesterday intervened personally to stop disqualification proceedings against the directors of the defence company Astra Holdings, which was embroiled in the controversies over the secret arming of Iran and Iraq.

Her decision ends one of the longest running political dramas of the 1990s, involving three Commons committee hearings, a customs investigation and a DTI inquiry.

Gerald James, former chairman of Astra, said last night: "This brings to an end eight years of persecution in my attempts to expose corruption at the highest level of government and within the security services."

"It has cost the taxpayer millions of pounds and there should be an inquiry along the lines of Sir Richard Scott's into the arms to Iraq scandal."

Mr James and three other directors were due to face a

civil action next month to disqualify them as company directors for the collapse of Astra in 1991. But at a preliminary hearing in February, Mrs Beckett re-considered the 35 charges. The judge expressed his dismay at the cost of the impending case, after it became clear the DTI inspectors who examined the collapse in 1993 had recommended no action be taken against all but one director.

Mrs Beckett said she had made her decision on grounds of public interest.

Astra came to public notice when it took over a Belgian arms company, FRB, and found some of the contracts were for Saddam Hussein's supergun. A subsidiary, BMARC, was later revealed to have secretly shipped naval cannons to Iran via Singapore.

After his removal from the board in 1991, Mr James has provided copious memoranda to the public hearings into the arms trade, alleging that Astra, with the connivance of British intelligence, secretly supplied both sides in the Iran-Iraq war.

Catching burglars by their feet

Duncan Campbell on clues in shoes

BURGLARS who steal to buy the latest fashion in trainers may be contributing to their downfall. Improvements in scientific techniques of identifying footmarks mean that more criminals are being caught from marks left at the crime scene.

Until recently, police may have got only four or five prints from footmarks. Now up to 40 may be found. These are second only to fingerprints in assisting in detection, particularly of burglars, whereas DNA, which has much higher public recognition, provides clues in a relatively small number of cases.

A series of research projects aimed at increasing the use of footprints in detection has been launched, a spokesman for the Forensic Science Service has confirmed.

Its latest figures indicate that footprints are left at around 30 per cent of crime scenes, and a third of these offer identifiable marks.

In the West Midlands, which had 89,000 burglaries in 1996/97, useful traces would be recovered in around 10,000 cases. The West Midlands force is one of a growing number concentrating more on finding footprints at crime scenes.

Marks that help scientists to identify shoes include

scuffs, burns from cigarette ends, wear from the way people walk and sole patterns.

The shoes are more than 250 million items of footwear sold in the UK every year, and some manufacturers change sole designs every few months.

Even if a burglar has stopped wearing a particular kind of shoe, photographs in his home or from previous arrests may show the style.

"The figures [on footwear marks] speak for themselves," said Keith Barnett of the FSS. The marks provided "great corroborative evidence."

A system known as Silar (Shoeprint Image Capture and Retrieval) was developed to deal with the enormous volume of prints left by criminals. It now has a database of 2,700 images, which include the variety of bars, circles and geometrical shapes found on shoes.

Whether burglars take precautions against being detected via their footwear is less clear.

In the thirties a famous London burglar, Edward Vickers, was nicknamed Flannel-foot because he covered his feet in cloth so he could move around a house silently.

He was jailed in 1977, having committed 135 burglaries that year, and died in prison.

Hopes

Alan Travis visits

brisk and busy' cent

aiming to turn young

people from crime

W

For a moment,

the room was

quiet. The

silence was

broken by

the sound of

the door

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empty.

The



The new Medway Secure Trainee Centre in Kent where, aided by 100 staff, 40 'trainees' aged 12-14, will receive an experimental mixture of education, care and discipline — at a weekly cost of some £2,500 each

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARTIN ANGLER

Hopes high at first 'child jail'

Alan Travis visits
'brisk and busy' centre
aiming to turn young
people from crime

WHEN the first "trainee" arrives at Britain's first "child jail" near the Kent village of Borstal on Friday, he will be faced with the most concerted attempt yet to break him from continuing a life of crime.

Most of the 40 trainees, aged 12 to 14, will probably already have clocked up more than 50 burglaries and car thefts, but those involved in running Group 4's "brisk and busy" regime believe their £2,500-a-week plus experimental mixture of education, care and discipline will yield results.

Sue Clifton, the director of Britain's first Secure Training Centre, who has 16 years' experience in residential child care, says her 100 staff will ensure the children are too busy to have the time to turn the place into what critics have called a "college of crime".

Most of the staff come from a social services or education background, with nine teachers and six social workers involved. Few come from the prison service.

The complex of house blocks, gyms, education building, reception centre, artificial pitch and communal "village green" area resembles a sheltered housing scheme for the elderly — but one behind an 18ft fence. Nearby is a woman's prison, the local jail and the site of



The Secure Training Centre's director Sue Clifton, who rejects critics' fears that her establishment, run by Group 4, will become a 'college of crime'

But trainees will find they can earn privileges if they simply manage to last 30 minutes in a lesson without disrupting the class. They will also have to take part in small discussion groups on the effects of their crimes on their victims, and the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Trainees have to wash and iron their own clothes and bed linen, also cook their supper and tidy their bedrooms. They can wear their own clothes and strict anti-bullying and no smoking policies will be enforced.

Some of the children will be hundreds of miles from home, and will be allowed one visit from their families per week, or more depending on their behaviour. They will be able to make and take phone calls in their bedrooms, but will have to ask for a plug-in handset from a staff member each time, and will have a list of 10 approved numbers they can call. Among the authorised numbers are Child Line, the Samaritans and the Voice of

Daily timetable

- **0730:** Woken by staff, make bed and breakfast, wash up, meet to discuss day's individual training programme
- **0850:** Education, gym or offence-focused work
- **1200:** Escorted back to living units
- **1215:** Lunch
- **1250:** Washing, ironing clothes, and time in rooms
- **1330:** Back to classrooms/gym for afternoon session
- **1630:** Living units, social skills, domestic training, homework and prepare evening meal, unwind/relax, supervised visits
- **1715:** Meals in dining areas
- **1830:** Social education, offence-focused work, Youth Award schemes, talks by outsiders
- **2030:** Return to living areas
- **2130:** Bedtime for all trainees; allocation of extra incentives earned, eg radios, books, etc
- **2200:** Lights out

Dublin frees IRA men in effort to boost peace deal

Decision on prisoners meant to ease Sinn Féin's path, but risks provoking Unionist anger

Rory Carroll

THE IRISH government last night announced the early release of nine IRA prisoners to try to boost the Northern Ireland peace accord.

The announcement, which will anger some parts of the Unionist community, was seen as an official attempt to help the Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, to secure party

backing for the peace strategy. All nine prisoners have been jailed for serious terrorist crimes but not murder, a spokesman for the Irish government said.

The move comes as Unionist attempts to kill the peace settlement will intensify today amid signs that the cries of sellout are swaying the undecided.

Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party formally launches its campaign for a no vote in May's referendum

with a series of newspaper advertisements and a "plain man's guide" to the agreement.

At a separate meeting, around 120 members of the Grand Orange Lodge are expected to reject the deal in a secret ballot, piling further pressure on David Trimble as he struggles to reassure his Ulster Unionist Party that he did not concede too much to republicans.

One dissident MP, William Ross, said the deal and Mr Trimble could be finished by Saturday's vote by the party's 800-member ruling body, the Ulster Unionist Council.

Gerry Adams must sell the deal to Sinn Féin grassroots in Dublin on the same day.

Dissidents and supporters agreed yesterday that Mr Trimble's position would be jeopardised unless he obtained a large majority, at least two thirds of the vote.

A leadership challenge cannot be ruled out. Only four of the party's 10 MPs have declared support for the deal.

Undecided party members will look for guidance to the outcome of today's Grand Orange Lodge vote, which is expected to flush out the view of Martin Smyth, Ulster Unionist MP and lodge member.

Mr Trimble and his deputy, John Taylor, remained upbeat. Supporters have been told to canvass doubters with one message: There is no alternative. Rejection would

turn the Ulster Unionists into pariahs at Westminster and provoke retribution from Tony Blair.

One MP who had been reported to be in the anti-agreement camp, Roy Beggs, yesterday said he could be persuaded to change his mind.

Sinn Féin's executive met yesterday to hear from the party's negotiators and plan a strategy for Saturday's party conference, when several thousand republicans are expected to travel to Dublin. As with previous initiatives, the leadership may hedge a definitive decision for several weeks.

Martin Kettle in Washington

TONY Blair will advise Bill Clinton within the next few days whether he should visit Northern Ireland next month in the run-up to the May 22 referendum on the Irish peace agreement.

Mr Clinton is under pressure to make the trip from his advisers, the US Irish lobby and from nationalist opinion

in both halves of Ireland. But it emerged yesterday that Mr Blair will have the decisive vote in the president's decision.

The Prime Minister will give Mr Clinton his assessment of the early responses to the peace deal and will advise privately as to whether the US president's presence would help or hinder the campaign for ratification.

Mr Clinton is keen to make a second visit to Northern Ireland, which he visited in November 1995 during the first IRA ceasefire.

Predictable support for a Clinton visit has come from the Irish government, John Hume's SDLP, Sinn Féin and from nationalists and republicans in the US Congress. Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam is in favour, as is Senator George Mitchell, the talks chairman.

However, when Mr Clinton met Senator Mitchell at the White House on Monday he conspicuously resisted weak-end attempts to make an immediate announcement. "If it would help, of course I would be willing to go," Mr Clinton said. "But I think it's important not to make that decision yet."

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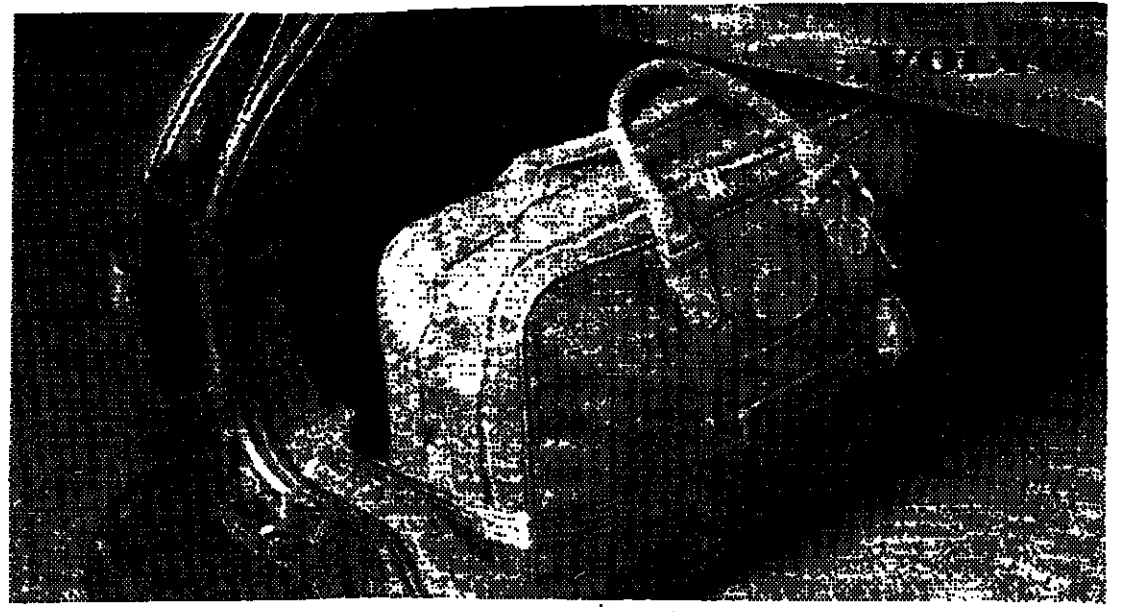
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Activists wearing Soviet army uniforms sit atop a tank at a rally yesterday in Prague's Hradcanske Square in support of Czech membership of Nato. Their dress and weapons recall the 1939 German and 1968 Russian invasions of the former Czechoslovakia. MPs were expected to vote by a big majority last night to join the alliance

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER JENSEN

Fairytale of the philosopher-king

Ian Traynor in Bonn

WHILE President Vaclav Havel was rushed last night to an operating theatre in Austria for emergency surgery, politicians in Prague were helping to make one of his dreams come true.

Since emerging as the moral fulcrum of anti-communist forces in 1989 and spearheading the Velvet Revolution in what was then Czechoslovakia, Mr Havel has battled for his country's inclusion in the Western military alliance.

Czech MPs brought that campaign to a climax in a

debate yesterday and were expected last night to vote by a handsome majority to join Nato.

For the diminutive man long feted as Prague's philosopher-king, it is yet another fairytale ending. Ten years ago Mr Havel did not go out without his toothbrush lest he find himself picked up and sent to a communist prison.

The revolution he led in 1989 was symbolised by his embrace with the late Alexander Dubcek, leader of the trampled Prague Spring of 1968, in front of the peaceful crowds on Prague's Wenceslas Square.

Within a couple of years, that symbolism was shattered. Dubcek was a Slo-

vak, Mr Havel a Czech. Both yielded to the political operators who broke up the country, Vaclav Klaus and Vladimir Meciar.

Mr Meciar remains in power in Slovakia, at the head of the most authoritarian government in central Europe. But Mr Havel had his revenge on Mr Klaus last year when he played a central role in deposing the prime minister.

As a reward for his charismatic revolutionary service, Mr Havel was catapulted into Prague Castle at the beginning of 1990.

He resisted the break-up of Czechoslovakia, but real power rested with the monetarist Mr Klaus and the populist Mr Meciar.

After the break-up at the end of 1992, Mr Havel was elected Czech president and won a second term by a slim majority last January. But for most of the 1990s, while Mr Havel was prince of Prague, the power rested with Mr Klaus. His was the most stable government in post-communist Europe, and his espousal of radical economic transformation won plaudits in the West and envy in eastern Europe.

Mr Havel, a conservative Christian Democrat with a social and moral conscience, bridled at the money-worship promoted by Mr Klaus.

Last year the prime minister got his come-uppance

when he was felled by a party corruption scandal. The president played a central and questionable role in bringing him down. His demolition of Mr Klaus confirmed insiders' views that Mr Havel was not as idealistic as he appeared, but was a formidable political operator fuelled by personal rancour, ambition and rivalry.

The president oversaw the installation of a weak interim government which also helped to reinforce his own indispensability to the Czech Republic.

He has just announced early elections for June in which the favourites to win are the Social Democrats of Milos Zeman.



President Vaclav Havel: the charismatic revolutionary whose idealism masks formidable political skills

Kohl partners squabble as SPD rivals take the lead

Ian Traynor in Bonn

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl's squabbling coalition partners embarked on a damage limitation course yesterday as the latest poll figures showed the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) opening up an unprecedented lead before September's general election in Germany.

With the chancellor's Christian Democrats and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, at daggers drawn over European Union policy, the election manifesto and personnel disputes, the polls put Gerhard Schröder's SPD at 44 per cent, 10 points ahead of the CDU.

Manfred Güllner, head of the Forsa polling institute, said it was the SPD's biggest lead over the CDU in the history of post-war Germany.

With state elections due in Saxony-Anhalt next week, the SPD is running up to 20 points ahead of Mr Kohl's party locally, although both big parties finished neck-and-neck in 1994 in the state.

The CDU leaders in Munich, the Bavarian capital, have stepped up their attacks on the Bonn government and have sharply criticised key elements of Mr Kohl's policy.

Theo Waigel, the finance minister in Bonn who is also CDU chairman, yesterday ordered voters of silence from his juniors in an attempt to keep the government coalition from scoring own goals.

Edmund Stoiber, the CDU prime minister of Bavaria and Mr Waigel's rival, has provoked a storm by demanding that EU matters be taken away from the foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, and that a cabinet post be created for EU affairs. The attack was seen as an indirect assault on Mr Kohl, who is the architect of German EU policy.

Other CDU leaders said Bavaria refused to accept Wolfgang Schäuble as a future chancellor. Last year Mr Kohl snatched the CDU parliamentary leader as his successor.

Commentators say Mr Stoiber is calculating that the centre-right coalition will lose the general election and is already distancing himself from the Kohl camp.

Russian Communists split over Kiriyenko

James Meek in Moscow

THE Russian Communists split yesterday when the party's chairman of parliament, Gennady Zyuganov, broke with the leadership to publicly endorse the economic liberal Sergei Kiriyenko as Russia's next prime minister.

The move came while the party's leader, Gennady Zyuganov, was away from Moscow and is particularly embarrassing for the Communists, coming the day after President Boris Yeltsin ordered his chief of staff to buy the support of parliamentary deputies with goods such as cars and flats.

Mr Zyuganov told Radio Russia after meeting Mr Yeltsin that he expected Mr Kiriyenko to cross the 226-vote threshold in the state Duma on Friday. He said he would be among those voting for the former banker.

The chairman, who had tried to convince Mr Yeltsin to offer a more acceptable candidate, said the president was determined to put Mr Kiriyenko at the head of the cabinet, and said he would dissolve the Duma if it rejected him three times. Friday's vote will be the second.

"I think the majority of deputies will make the right choice — the Duma must be



Sergei Kiriyenko: Faces a second vote on Friday

vince other members and that the Communists would stick by their decision to vote against the president's nominee.

Yuri Ivanov, a Communist and deputy head of the Duma's legislation committee, said he would never support Mr Yeltsin's candidate.

"You can talk all you like about tactical issues, about whether it's worth risking the Duma and plunging the country into elections for the sake of a boy in short trousers like Kiriyenko," he said.

But there were signs that the Communists were facing a broader split. In another blow for Mr Zyuganov, the constitutional court rejected his contention that the president could not present the same candidate twice.

The two regional leaders most favoured by the parliamentary opposition as alternative candidates — Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, and the chairman of the upper house, Yegor Stroyev — have come out in favour of Mr Kiriyenko.

In the devastated Siberian coal region of the Kuzbass, the Communist-friendly governor, Aman Tulev, also spoke up for Mr Kiriyenko, who visited the region while he was energy minister.

"He has an analytical mind and a computer-like brain," he said.



A woman passes water from the Jordan river to fellow pilgrims

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCPHERSON

Settlement pledge sets back peace

Our correspondent in Jerusalem

A LEADING Israeli government hawk yesterday promised to continue aiding the expansion of Jewish settlements in the Jordan valley — part of the occupied West Bank territories — in a blow to renewed United States and European peace efforts due to begin this weekend.

In what will surely be seen in Washington and London as a further snub, Ariel Sharon, the rightwing national infrastructure minister, promised Jordan valley settlement leaders they would continue to receive government assistance to increase their population and territory.

The pledge, made on Monday, was reported by Israeli Radio yesterday along with news that the valley's 18 settlements have recently expropriated more land for agriculture.

Mr Sharon has been battling over maps with his prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu about the shape and extent of a future Palestinian state and demands the maintenance of a strong Israeli

presence between it and the Jordan Valley.

The Jordan Valley Authority yesterday claimed the settlements' population had grown by a record 10 per cent in the past year.

The authority's chairman, David Levy, said: "This is a real increase and [is] due to our efforts to absorb more people to our region and to

affect renewed efforts to kick-start the peace process by sealing a deal on a second withdrawal of Israeli troops from West Bank territory. US diplomatic officials refused to confirm or deny Israeli reports that President Bill Clinton's Middle East envoy, Dennis Ross, would be back in Jerusalem this weekend.

A new US initiative would coincide with Tony Blair's three-day visit to Israel and Palestinian-controlled Gaza, which is due to begin on Sunday.

Early signals indicate that the Prime Minister's visit will focus on efforts to conclude a deal on a joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial park at Karri on the Gaza-Israel border. Mr Blair will also lay a wreath at the grave of the murdered former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. He is expected to be accompanied by the former and present opposition Labour leaders Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak.

Meanwhile, water pipelines serving Jewish settlements in the north of the Negev desert were attacked on Monday evening, temporarily stopping water flow to agricultural areas. Israeli police suspect that Palestinians were behind the attack.

The expansion is bound to

Pilgrims brave Jordan's minefield

WATCHED through binoculars by Israeli soldiers, thousands of Christian pilgrims yesterday marched through minefields to the site where tradition holds that Jesus was baptised by John, writes David Sharrock.

Kasr al-Yahud — the Arabic name for the place on the River Jordan where, Matthew's gospel records, the miracle of the baptism took place — now lies in the centre of a closed Israeli military zone. But four times a year escorted Christian groups are allowed down to the river bank.

Yesterday was the turn of the Greek Orthodox Church, which celebrates Easter next weekend.

The monastery of St John the Baptist has been abandoned since the Six Day War in 1967. But deep cracks in the walls did not stop the pilgrims buying and lighting dozens of tapering candles, and kissing the few faded icons that remain.

From a gaping hole in the roof the view across the river to Jordan is obscured by a massive Israeli gun emplacement. But armoured vehicles kept a discreet distance and the blue and white flag of the Greek Orthodox Church flew proudly over the site for the day.

Hur Dong-Suk, a Korean Presbyterian, was showing his family the holy site. "It's just like our border back home," he smiled, surveying the razor wire and soldiers.

Israel signed a peace treaty with Jordan in 1993, and King Hussein is growing impatient with his frightened neighbour's tardiness in dismantling its minefields and developing Kasr al-Yahud's tourism potential.

The lure of the river was so great to Russians in the last century that a tower was built on the Mount of Olives so pilgrims too firm to make the final leg of the journey could at least see its waters.

World news in brief

Amnesty alleges abuses in Burma

THE Burmese army has tortured and killed hundreds of people from the Shan ethnic minority and forced at least 300,000 to flee their homes in the past two years, Amnesty International said today.

The London-based human rights organisation said one of its delegates had interviewed dozens of people in Thailand who had lost relatives at the hands of the armed forces.

The Burmese authorities began releasing Shan civilians two years ago to stop alleged support for the opposition Shan State Army. Amnesty said the army had killed at least 300 people in massacres last June and July, after many victims returned home in search of food. — *Reuters, London.*

Journalist seeks justice

THE Cameroonian newspaper editor Pius Njawa was yesterday sentenced by the appeal court to a year in prison and a reduced fine for publishing "false news".

Last week Mr Njawa appealed against a two-year sentence imposed after his newspaper, *Messenger*, published a story about President Paul Biya's "heart problem". The story had been confirmed by two sources close to Mr Biya. The case is likely to be taken to the supreme court in the capital, Douala. — *Foreign Staff.*

Albanian criminal kills police

TWO young Albanian policemen were killed and their superior officer wounded yesterday, when a convicted criminal fired at them with an anti-tank weapon, the interior ministry said.

The casualties occurred after anti-terrorist troops surrounded the assailant's house in the Fier region, 90 miles south-west of Tirana, and called on him to surrender, the ministry said. The criminal died in an ensuing shoot-out.

Albania is awash with more than 500,000 weapons looted from army depots last year during widespread violence that took the country to the brink of economic collapse. — *Reuters, Tirana.*

Cardinal offers to quit

THE disgraced former Vienna archbishop Hans Hermann Groer said yesterday he was willing to resign his church duties in the wake of a Vatican investigation into allegations of sexual abuse.

The offer comes before a Papal visit to Austria in June and follows an appeal by Austria's bishops to the Vatican to rule on allegations that Cardinal Groer, aged 78, abused several monks.

Cardinal Groer resigned as head of the Roman Catholic Church in Austria in 1995 after charges that he molested a schoolboy some 20 years ago. He had never clearly admitted or denied the allegations. — *Reuters, Vienna.*

US clergy get their guns

KENTUCKY clergy fearful of armed robbers stealing the collection money will be able to carry concealed guns in church later this month, after legislators passed an amendment to the state weapons law.

Ministers and priests from rural churches lobbied state lawmakers to allow them to carry concealed guns after the clergy was deliberately left out of a 1996 law allowing concealed weapons in Kentucky. The amendment was passed in the House by 76-9 and is due to be signed into law today, despite opposition from some lawmakers and ministers. — *Reuters, Kentucky.*

McKinnon eyes new post

NEW ZEALAND's foreign affairs minister, Don McKinnon, yesterday confirmed he had been asked by Commonwealth countries to serve as secretary general but had not decided whether to seek the post. Mr McKinnon had "not ruled it in or out", his office said.

His spokeswoman would not identify which of the 54 Commonwealth countries had approached him to stand for the London-based post. She denied that Mr McKinnon was mounting an informal campaign for the post, which becomes vacant at the end of next year, and that foreign ministry staff had begun lobbying on his behalf. — *AP, Wellington.*

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Asian youth takes child labour fight to Pakistan

Richard Galpin in Lahore sees children marching for their rights



Children from across Asia voice their opposition to child labour as the Global March hits Lahore yesterday

THOUSANDS of children marched through Lahore yesterday demanding an end to child labour and calling on the government to improve the education system to enable all Pakistani children to attend school.

The colourful procession, which brought city-centre traffic to a halt, was led by 50 children from countries throughout Asia who are taking part in a campaign to highlight the world-wide problem of child labour.

The Global March began in the Philippines three months ago and reached Pakistan on Monday. The children will spend about a week there before travelling on to Iran and Turkey. The march ends in Geneva in two months' time when the United Nations is due to discuss plans to eliminate the most exploitative forms of child labour around the world.

Official estimates indicate that more than 3 million Paki-

stans under the age of 14 are engaged in full-time employment, often in appalling conditions. Non-governmental organisations and human rights activists put the figure much higher.

The country has been under intense pressure to eradicate the problem from its export industries after revelations that thousands of

and a quarter of production has now been independently confirmed as child-free.

The Pakistani government has promised to take further measures against child labour. Speaking at yesterday's rally in Lahore the labour minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, said the government was committed to eradicating the problem.

Those in the football industry are well treated compared to those in brick kilns

young children were employed to hand-stitch footballs, many of which were bought by leading international companies.

Under an agreement signed last year by the UN and football manufacturing companies based in the city of Sialkot, all children were to be removed from the industry within 18 months. The first phase has just been completed

"I assure you that the government will strictly implement all the relevant laws to eliminate child labour," he said.

But Pakistani governments have traditionally been long on rhetoric and short on action. The football campaign will benefit only a small percentage of the total child workforce. The majority work in agriculture and as do-

mestic servants. Very little has been done to tackle these sectors.

"It is very unfortunate that so much money has been channelled by the international agencies into the Sialkot project," said Anees Jilani of the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child. "There are only about 6,000 children involved in the football industry there, and yet millions of children are working across Pakistan."

Even senior UN officials admit that children working in the football industry are well treated relative to those labouring in the country's brick kilns and other hazardous and exploitative industries.

"The problem is that the government's hands are tied," said one source. "If they tackled the problem directly they would be out of office tomorrow because the country is dominated by the large feudal landlords and they employ large amounts of child labour."

Two Koreas fail to strike deal on aid to North

John Gittings

NORTH and South Korea yesterday dashed hopes of progress in their new round of talks in Beijing, failing to agree on a quick deal to break four years of inter-governmental deadlock.

Pyongyang was seeking fertiliser aid from the South, and said it was prepared to discuss "other issues".

But Seoul's plan to link the fertiliser deal to an agreement on reuniting Korean families proved too abrupt for North Korean negotiators.

Seoul wants a new start under President Kim Dae-jung to entice Pyongyang back into the dialogue suspended in 1994 after the death of the North's President Kim Il-sung.

The resumption of talks is a big step forward and both sides say they will continue meeting. But they face difficulties breaking with the past.

Seoul's negotiators insisted they could not ease the North's agricultural crisis with fertiliser without a quid pro quo from Pyongyang.

Jeong Se-hyun, their delegation head, said: "The South Korean public will not support unilateral concessions."

Pyongyang's chief negotiator, Jon Kum-chol, said it had already shown good faith by agreeing to expand the talks to cover "other issues of mutual interest". It was unfair of Seoul to demand an instant deal on separated families.

The North is always reluctant to be rushed into a deal. This may reflect the difficulty of securing approval in a political system under the one-man rule of Kim Il-sung's successor and son, Kim Jong-il.

Pyongyang also has to decide how far to respond to the visible eagerness of Kim Dae-jung to pursue a new dialogue. The decision may be hampered by hardline opposition to talks in the North's



Jeong Se-hyun: seeks quid pro quo from Pyongyang

army, the principal backer behind its own new president.

The North's need for food aid is still serious, although the United Nations World Food Programme said at the weekend that there were signs of improvement. Its director, Catherine Bertini, said in Beijing that young children seemed better nourished.

Ms Bertini warned Pyongyang that the programme would cut back supplies if it was unable to monitor distribution. International agencies have previously muffled their disquiet over lack of proper access, believing the main priority is to get supplies into the country.

"We saw kids who were skeletal last year," Ms Bertini said, saying now children had more energy. The North has received nearly 1 million tons of food aid in 12 months.

Nutrition remains a problem for adults. "Many people are extremely thin," Ms Bertini said. Many hospitals lacked antibiotics and equipment.

The programme's assessment contrasts with more alarming reports of famine from smaller agencies. These may reflect some aspects of life in areas of the more remote north.

Indonesians seek UK scholarships

John Aglionby in Jakarta

TENS of thousands of Indonesians desperate for foreign qualifications as their country sinks into an economic abyss are flocking to a road show by 37 British universities offering 450 scholarships.

Crowds have jammed halls in the capital, Jakarta, and the second-largest city, Surabaya, to learn how to save £25,000 on British higher education.

"No country has ever offered such a large number of scholarships," said Andriwati, aged 23, an engineering student hoping to do an MBA abroad. "With the economy collapsing, people believe it is even more important to get a foreign degree. And if we can do it cheaply so much the better."

Indonesia's economy has been almost paralysed by nine months of turmoil. The currency, the rupiah, has fallen more than 70 per cent, making it too expensive for all but a tiny minority to study abroad. Analysts say it will be years before a sustainable recovery.

The British government is providing £620,000, including a £240,000 grant from the Department of Trade and Industry, and the institutions are matching this. Liverpool University, for example, is allowing students to pay in rupiah at an exchange rate of 5,474 to the pound. The rupiah closed yesterday in Jakarta at 12,350 to the pound.

Other universities, such as Nottingham, are waiving tuition fees for some Masters applicants. Sarah Barton, one of Nottingham's international officers, said: "We provide some scholarships and at the same time a scheme as this generates massive interest."

Dr Neil Kemp, the Indonesia director of the British Council and organiser of the event, said: "Britain makes billions from foreign students and does not want to lose this."

Police fought students during a protest in Purwokerto, a town 180 miles east of Jakarta, to demand political and economic reforms and the ousting of President Suharto, the Repubblica newspaper said yesterday. Thirteen people, including three police, were injured.

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

IN what may well prove an important test case, a cyclist is suing Her Majesty's government for loss of his sex life. Simon Wadmore, a computer consultant, suffered various injuries — cracked ribs and a broken pelvis among them — when his penny-farthing collided with a car in west London on Christmas Day 1994, leaving him in hospital for 13 weeks. However, the injury that most interests the *Belling and Acton Gazette* is the "burned penis" which, he claims, has rendered him incapable of any conjugal. Mr Wadmore insists that "grooves in the road", which he claims were poorly maintained, caused the collision, and has written to his former MP Sir George Young, the one-time cycling Transport Secretary, for help. By a particularly poignant irony, the penny-farthing itself was so unscathed that Mr Wadmore was able to sell it to help pay for his son's school fees. In a classic triumph of hope over experience, however, he has since bought another just like it. We wish him safe cycling, and look forward to the trial.

MR David Elias writes to upbraid the *Diary* for an error-strewn item last week. Countdown, he points out, "is not a quiz, as no questions are asked, but a game show." Oops. "It was shown on Monday (April 6), not Tuesday." Oops again. "And the letter selection was not as printed (WKRNAEHT); there was not a 'T' in the selection, but an 'F' instead." Ouch. My thanks to Mr Elias, a former Countdown champion, and apologies to Richard Whiteley, Carol Vorderman, all in Dictionary Dell and, of course, to the Countdown clock. It will not happen again.

LONDON radio station Capital Gold continues to ridicule criticism that its football coverage tends towards the morose. "I think this game needs some Frozac," said the reporter at Orient's game on Monday. "To live it up a little."

SPEAKING of that psychotropic drug, the people of Sao Paulo enjoy an unexpected treat. Yesterday, Estado de Sao Paulo, the Brazilian city's leading newspaper, reprinted — in full, and on page two — the latest Spectator column of Paul Johnson. In it, the dear old boy revealed that he is writing a *thin* volume in praise of the Guardian (there may be the occasional word of constructive criticism too; Paul is an open minded man, and always strives for balance), and gives his telephone and fax numbers for those who have information to impart. He even reveals his home address, and already all leading airlines flying out of Sao Paulo are reporting a leap in ticket sales to Heathrow. "Thousands are heading for London," said a spokesman for Air France yesterday. "They have information for your sane and rational friend, and they want to give it to him in person."

FIRST OJ, then Louise Woodward, and now John Howard... there is no end to the hammer blows raining down on the reputation of American justice? In Louisville, Kentucky, Mr Howard has been scandalously convicted and sentenced to a month inside — despite having a watertight defence to the charge of driving while completely blind. He pleaded to the court that he was quite sane behind the wheel. Dogs Today reports, since Cindy, his two-year-old Flat Coated Retriever, was trained to bark once at a red light, twice at a green one and to growl at any approaching car.

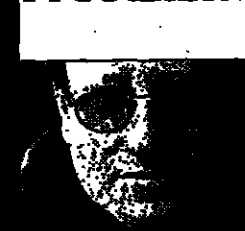
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Plus ça change...



It's the new religion — putting the me back into meaning

Jonathan Freedland



IT'S STILL, number one, still at the top of the charts. It's not The Verve's Urban Hymns, nor even Bridget Jones's Diary — both of which were topped eventually. It is the Little Book of Calm, the palm-sized collection of meditative wisdom which this week marked its 63rd week in the best-sellers' top ten, reaching up nearly twice the sales of its nearest rival.

In this tiny volume, the pages have no numbers — just a pearl of soothing wisdom set in reassuring shades of blue and white, with a puff of cloud drifting overhead. Each message is the length of a greetings card inscription, giving the page an uncanny resemblance to the instructions on a packet of Johnson's Baby Powder. There can be barely a thousand words in the whole thing. And yet, at the time of writing, the Little Book of Calm had sold 523,000 copies in the UK alone.

There are spin-offs, of course. The Australian author, Paul Wilson, has established a Calm Centre with its own Web site, put out several CDs of relaxing music — flutes, waterfalls — and, inevitably, produced more books: the Little Book of Calm At Work is due out in September. As with any commercial smash, the imitators and spoofs are not far behind. The Little Book of Panic is said to be in the pipeline. But might the LBC be more than a publishing phenomenon? Could it be, perhaps, a little book of warning — offering a nugget of insight into not only our collective emotional health, but our spiritual condition, too?

The obvious explanation for LBC's success in Britain — ac-

counting for a third of its worldwide sales — is that we British are more stressed than most. We work the longest hours in Europe and we need all the calm we can get. Last week's batch of new regulations, aimed at bringing Britain into line with the European Working Time Directive, highlighted just how much hard labour we're all doing. Not only are millions of us exceeding the 48-hour week mandated in Brussels, one in eight Britons toils away with not so much as a day in paid holiday. No wonder we draw comfort from Mr Wilson's tips, like the one urging us to sell our wristwatches. "Have you ever noticed how relaxed you feel the moment you remove your watch? Remove yours from time to time, and remove yourself from time pressure."

But today's stress epidemic is not solely down to the time famine. We're also being asked to make more decisions than ever before, over even the smallest things: a trip to the supermarket presents six different choices of strawberry yoghurt.

THERE is an additional pressure to contend with now: we are all expected to undergo dramatic self-improvement. No sooner have the women's (and now men's) magazines told us to lose weight, than Carol Smilie is on TV demanding that we change rooms. Just when we think metamorphosis is essential, Kate Moss pops up courtesy of Calvin Klein urging us to "Just Be". Wherever we turn, we are told that what we are doing at that moment is not good enough. How comforting to open up

the Little Book of Calm and read, "Leave it to others to be perfect... Be content with what you are — you'll be much more relaxed as a result."

So Paul Wilson has found the weak spot in our national lifestyle and massaged it with a welcome dose of rose oil (Tip No 4). But he has zeroed in on a larger problem, too. The book's success has revealed a gaping hole in our spiritual life.

"His mission is to reduce the pulse rates of everyone," says the publisher at Penguin Books, slipping easily into the language of faith. "He's pretty evangelical about it." As well he might be. For the Little Book of Calm is nothing less than a religious text for the late 1990s.

"There's an enormous spiritual vacuum," says Rabbi Julia Neuberger. "People are looking for a form of spiritual calm." They are not finding it in the organised faiths. The certainty of the old dogmas is off-putting, says the rabbi: people know from their own lives that nothing is certain. Besides, familiar problems endure. Traditional religion can look stuffy to newcomers, the churches and synagogues too concerned with their own internal politicking — constantly buried in disputes among the already-faithful.

The Little Book of Calm works by offering the comforts of religion, with none of the aggravation. If church seems daunting, requiring learning and commitment, then Wilson's little collection feels like a solution — presented in easily digestible, bite-size chunks. "Here is a remedy which is small enough to put in your pocket and

carry around with you, and you don't have to make time for it," says Annabel Miller, who charts Britain's spiritual life for the *Tablet*. "You can't exactly start reading Thomas Aquinas on the bus, can you?"

And the Little Book has a further advantage over the Good Book: reading it is an individual activity. For the LBC seems to chime in with another shift in national habits — the privatisation of spirituality. If people listened to William Hague more, they might have noticed his Easter admission that he doesn't go to church too often, preferring to walk in his beloved Yorkshire Dales. There, he said, he can "feel God."

The pantheism of this remark is interesting, but so is the confession that, for the Conservative leader, religion is no longer a collective business. Coming from Mr Hague — who likes to start each day with 20 minutes of transcendental meditation — this is no surprise. But I suspect he is not the only one to feel this way. In the United States, churchgoing is still a massive activity, but so is do-it-yourself religion — typified by best-selling spiritual self-help books of the LBC variety, with Chicken Soup for the Soul still the exemplar.

Putting the "me" into meaning makes perfect sense in America, where individualism has always been part of the national creed. But it is relatively new for Britain — a sign of just how far the old collective bonds have broken down, and our once public rituals have become private. Maybe we should fret about the change. Or maybe we should close our eyes, breathe deeply and just keep calm.

In recompense, and by one of those coincidences that must delight the Irish, Britain's net contribution to the EU budget is almost exactly the net receipts to Ireland. Dublin pays only 1 per cent of the EU budget, but gets 4 per cent of its spending. Few countries have done better out of Europe than Ireland, which helps explain why the MEP Ian Paisley is quite happy to work with and learn from his Irish colleagues in Brussels and Strasbourg, whatever the Reverend Paisley may fulminate from his pulpit back home.

It may be impossible to quantify, but this is probably the real European effect. The institutions of Europe, from its parliament to its commission and its council, forces Northerners and Southerners from the same island to sit and work alongside each other in a European forum that transcends their tribal and national differences.

The EU organises its Peace and Reconciliation Funds, which began after the 1994 cease-fire, in a way that forces the North and the six border counties of the Republic to work together. They steer funds to companies which undertake joint marketing and joint research projects, trade unions, health boards and farm and forestry associations and community groups which work together.

TO SEE the future of Ulster at work, start looking in Europe. Take that unusual couple, the Unionist former Lord Mayor of Belfast Reg Empey and the Sinn Féin councillor Alex Maskey, sitting chummy side by side in the coach as the Belfast European Partnership toured Brussels last summer. Or take the regular scene at the European parliament in Strasbourg. The formidable combination of the Rev Ian Paisley and the SDLP's John Hume, on affable first-name terms outside the cramped confines of their battered province, have become a legendary lobbying team in the joint effort of getting Euro-money — and the new exemption from the ban on British "mad cow" beef — for Northern Ireland.

Nearly \$300 million a year of Europe's money has been pumped into Northern Ireland over the past four years, quite apart from its healthy share of the farm budget. There is a special investment scheme which cut 4 per cent off the interest payments for European investment Bank loans, an annual \$20 million Peace and Reconciliation programme which requires local Catholic and Protestant community groups to work out together how to spend it.

But the real European role is far more important than money. Europe has been the catalyst for the modernisation of the Irish Republic, helping transform the place from the backward and papist-run theocracy of Unionist myth into today's Celtic Tiger, growing this decade at a steady 7 per cent a year.

A GENERATION ago, the industry of Belfast and the British welfare state were magnets for Irish immigration. Not any more. When Ulster looks South, it sees a thriving modern state where divorce is now legal and where the GDP per capita is higher than that of Britain. They see also an Irish republic which has been liberated by Europe from the old economic dominance of Britain, and is determined to join the new single currency whatever the cautious Brits might say.

In fact, the Brits do very well out of Ireland's boom, as the only EU member that regularly enjoys a trade surplus with Dublin. In 1995, Britain took a quarter of Ireland's exports, and provided almost 40 per cent of its imports.

Frank Close is head of theoretical physics at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire, and on secondment to CERN.

Tigers of peace

Martin Walker



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brought people into rooms at community level when they have been unable to meet to discuss higher constitutional matters. In such a way, reconciliation has continued even during breakdowns in the peace process," reported the Peak District's Labour MEP Ariane McCarthy in her report last month to the House of Commons on the EU's work.

"A link can be traced between grass roots and higher level negotiations. The political actors in the peace process have been given an incentive to talk by the precedents constantly being set at local level by cross-community discussions over the Peace and Reconciliation Funds."

This European effect is now being taken deliberately further. Just as Slovakia was warned that the precedents constantly being set at local level by cross-community discussions over the Peace and Reconciliation Funds.

The Accession Partnership agreement with Latvia requires that, by the end of this year, the country "takes measures to facilitate the naturalisation process to better integrate non-citizens including stateless children and enhance Latvian language training for non-Latvian speakers." Failure to comply means an end to EU financial aid.

Both the EU and NATO have used the carrot of membership to force applicant countries to resolve their differences before they can join. Hungary and Romania had to settle their border dispute over the rights of the Hungarian minority. Hungary and the Czech Republic have been required under the Accession Partnerships "to



Europe forces North and South to work alongside each other

improve the integration of the Roma (the gypsies)". Europe has learned to act in this prescriptive way from the unhappy lessons of admitting Greece before the Cyprus dispute was resolved, and from admitting Britain and Ireland while Ulster festered. Northern Ireland was seen at the time as an internal matter for the United Kingdom, and it is fair to say that the deadlock only began to break when this delusion was recognised.

In the event, it has taken the combined efforts of London and Dublin, the Clinton Administration in Washington and the Northern Irish themselves, to achieve the Good Friday agreement.

It is also striking that those British politicians and media outlets most critical of President Clinton's initial daring effort in 1993 to start something moving in Ulster by granting a visa to Gerry Adams tend to be those most hostile to the European project. Some of them have had the grace to admit they were wrong about Clinton's policy towards Northern Ireland.

Maybe one day, these strident defenders of British sovereignty will also come to admit that supra-national Europe also played a crucial role.

John Hume and Ian Paisley and Alex Maskey and Reg Empey know it already.

Guardian

The rise and fall of heroin
they is to hit demand

Letters to the Editor

Gays in

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Faux Irish

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The rise and rise of heroin

The key is to hit demand

PARENTS will recoil with horror at yesterday's warning — by the new drugs tsar Keith Hellawell — that heroin is now being sold in some places for the price of a pint of beer. He claimed that heroin is becoming the drug of first choice for an increasing number of young people who are inhaling it in cigarette form rather than injecting themselves. Some dealers, he said, are now selling it cheaply as a loss leader to encourage potential users into addiction. Mr Hellawell, former chief constable of West Yorkshire, had more shocking statistics to unload. He reckoned that, although the number of registered heroin addicts was 40,000, the true figure is three or four times higher and, worse, they are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. One recent survey, he added, found that 700 heroin addicts had committed an incredible 70,000 crimes in a three-month period. Even though heroin addicts are still only a small proportion of all drug users these figures will make sobering reading to a government pledged to be tough not only on crime but also on the causes of crime.

What can be done? US experience suggests that attempts to curb the supply of drugs are less cost-effective than trying to curb demand and trying to improve the way addicts are treated. America has a \$10 billion anti-drugs programme which has been used for everything from spraying crops in producer countries to shooting down traffickers' planes but without much noticeable effect. Even if supplies are cut off

from one source, the potential profits are so high (a kilogram of heroin costing \$850 at source in Pakistan has a street value here of £72,000) that some other supplier is sure to step in to fill the vacuum. Of course, there are some things that can be done — like a United Nations backed programme to extinguish much of the huge international debt piled up by the Third World. Money from the aid budget should also be made available to enable heroin producers in poor countries to grow other non-addictive products economically. And Turkey should be warned that entry into the EU will be even more difficult as long as 80 per cent of heroin supplies to the UK come through its territory.

In the end the most effective way will be to convince young people of the grave life-threatening dangers to which heroin usage exposes them. That is an extremely difficult but not impossible task. Eric Clapton, the guitarist said yesterday of his own addiction: "I've done this and I can tell you it does not work, it's a nightmare". But the guitarist, who plans to set up a drugs and drink rehabilitation centre in Antigua, admitted it wasn't easy because he himself had not been put off by the agonies of other addicts, and people often insisted on experimenting.

That may be the case — but we must not be deterred by the obvious difficulties otherwise nothing will ever be done. Some policies could work. These include more street-level drugs agencies giving advice aimed at young people rather than aimed at the long-time user; a targeted campaign of the kind that has had some success in reducing drinking and driving and smoking; and educating teachers and parents to the realities of contemporary drug culture (which seems to have eluded even today's allegedly street-wise, flower-power parents

who grew up in the swinging sixties). There is also much to be done with the treatment of offenders. Only 2.5 per cent of convicted drug abusers are offered a place on a treatment programme even though they cost £3,000 compared with £20,000 for a prison place and are more successful at rehabilitation. And why not restore the old idea of allowing GPs to prescribe the drug thereby helping to keep it under control? We are spending far too much public money on enforcement and not nearly enough on treatment, prevention and education. Like the people we are sincerely trying to help we are in danger of becoming addicted to the wrong course of action.

Taming the croc

The ANC takes the long view

IF THE people of Northern Ireland were to take time off from their celebrations to look at what is happening in South Africa, they might feel a moment's disquiet. It is six years since South Africans went through their own equally tortuous peace negotiations; four years since the first free elections in which it was revealed quite how tiny was the white, rightwing base of the National Party which had ruled the country for almost four decades. Yet the man who led it through 11 of apartheid's darker years, presiding over racist atrocities now being excoriated at Truth Commission hearings, is still causing trouble.

After years of cooking a snook at this most gentle and forgiving of reconciliation rituals, it will be announced today whether or not P W Botha will finally co-operate with the Truth Commission. Many, both inside the country and outside, feel that the

ANC has been far too patient for far too long with this arrogant old bigot: if he continues to refuse to co-operate, he should be thrown into jail — after all, thousands of his own opponents were jailed, tortured and killed.

But the ANC is all too aware that Botha is not alone. He represents a deep seam of recalcitrant racism among whites who remain angry and bitter, unable to come to terms with their diminished status in the new order. The murder of a black baby by a white farmer at the weekend is just one, horrific, example. The ANC, under the guidance of the wily Nelson Mandela, fears that Botha as martyr could provide the focus for right-wingers to start a violent terror campaign. In such a volatile society, awash with guns, peace is a fragile flower. And, next year — by which time, hopefully, the *groot kerkhof* will be thrashing harmlessly around in shallower waters — brings another potential flashpoint for the white right: the 100th anniversary of the Anglo-Boer war.

A negotiated peace settlement is a wonderful thing. But, as South Africa has discovered, it does not immediately give rise to a brave new society, free of bigotry and hatred. For years to come, the forces of darkness will still have to be painstakingly coaxed into the light.

The real victims

Mariam is part of a bigger case

CAN A little girl who is dying of leukemia be part of a "propaganda game" — by any standard of definition? The case of Mariam Hamza, scheduled to fly out from Baghdad to London today in the company of George Galloway MP, is fact not propaganda. She

needs specialist care which she cannot get in Iraq. The Foreign Office to its credit has helped: yesterday its minister of state Derek Fatchett said he was "delighted" to have been able to secure approval from the UN Sanctions Committee for the flight to bring Mariam out "for urgently needed medical treatment".

How does this affect the argument — made by the Foreign Secretary not so long ago in this newspaper — that there is no valid reason why Iraqi hospitals should not have enough medicine (which in theory is excluded from UN sanctions) to treat even the most serious cases? There are two separate issues here. One is whether the Iraqi regime could spend more of the funds which it is allowed from UN-controlled oil sales to purchase medicine and equipment, and thus significantly improve domestic treatment in Iraq. The answer to this is definitely yes. The other question is whether the procedure for gaining exemption from sanctions can block needed supplies (because they are suspected of having "dual-use" application) or because of bureaucratic delay. The answer to this, as some NGOs have reported, is also yes.

Both of these questions need to be addressed, but in the meantime, who suffers? Mr Galloway is often labelled "colourful", with a pejorative edge to the adjective. His handling of this case seems to have been very sober. The argument over sanctions misses the central issue: they do not appear to hurt Saddam Hussein. Whoever is ultimately responsible, they do hurt the ordinary people of Iraq. As Mr Galloway observes, Saddam and his cronies "have all got cigars and none of them are thin." Something is seriously wrong with the policy. We hope that Mariam's flight leads to successful treatment: the deadly paradox which it highlights needs treatment too.

Letters to the Editor

Of bugs, and other irritations

SO the location of the UK's new termite infestation is being kept secret? (They're here, they're hungry and they want your house, April 13). I'm surprised a variant of this wasn't used in Kent: "There's a new Channel Tunnel link somewhere in the South-east, its exact location is being kept secret, to protect property values." Dr Duncan Langford, Canterbury, Kent.

TERMITES were a problem in some parts of Paris and have been excluded with the excellent baiting techniques now available. Drywood termites are sitting comfortably in imported furniture in some centrally heated homes; other termites are in the soil of some imported plants. Outside of this environment they have little chance of survival. Dr M J Pearce, Termites consultant, Wallingford, Oxon.

PETER Pound's letter (April 4) about the booking policies of multiplexes is inaccurate. The Warner Village in Watford has already screened the non-Hollywood films, *Wild, Welcome To Sarajevo*, *Regeneration* and *One Night Stand*. In addition, several of the One To Watch films, like *Mrs Brown and Wings Of The Dove*, played three shows throughout the day and not just the single show at an outlandish time as he suggests. Warner Village tries to programme films our customers want to see, but it is often the decision of the distributor whether a film gets offered to a specific cinema. Raif Laidman, Warner Village Cinemas, London.

D A Juve (anag) (4.2) (Quick Crossword, April 14). Tony Brown, Beeston, Notts.

Gays in the pulpit ...

AFTER Peter Tatchell reminded the Archbishop of Canterbury of his Church's discrimination against gay and lesbian people (Gay activists storm Carey pulpit, April 13), George Carey resumed his sermon saying: "People in Britain are forgetting their Christian past."

Ordinances catalogued MS E MUS 229 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, support the fact that for 550 years, from 1000 to 1546, the Church administered London's Bankside brothels. The Church managed its 20 or so brothels so that they filled its coffers. For example, as many nuns financed their convents by working as prostitutes, the Church's ordinances of 1181 levied a fine of 20 shillings upon any brothel permitting a nun to work. With Christian fastidiousness, the Church also ordained that, on Holy Days, no whore should work between 5am and 11am or 1pm and 5pm.

These are just a few examples of our Christian past that we must, as the Archbishop says, not forget. David Cayte, London.

DESPITE his claims, the Archbishop does not "welcome discussion" on homosexuality.

... and sipping Moët in the cafés of Soho

WHILE I have every sympathy for Paul Mayhew and his boyfriend, Mark's grueling time with two dire, straight rugby players (Out with the lads, C2, April 14), there's something very unreal about their Soho environment. Gay northerners like me simply don't have the luxury of this delightful gay infrastructure. Mick and Wayne's world — while undoubtedly homophobic — does mirror an experience which is pretty much the norm for us. Somehow I

don't think pink-inflected restaurants, cab firms or bars tackle the problems which confront homosexuals who have to get on buses, eat in Littlewoods, or drink beer in bars which don't, as a rule, stock Moët! The effects of Diamond White are surely more real than drinking coffee with people "spilling out on to the pavement", or where gay taxi drivers, presumably, don't blow their horns or pass wind! Tony Purvis, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Someone who witnessed the Outrage demonstration, it seemed to be more about a leader trying to maintain his position at the head of a militant group than a serious attempt to forward his cause. The main issue for those like myself in the Church is whether gay clergy would live more effective lives if they lived with a gay partner, rather than lonely and unchallenged. On the evidence of Sunday, such practice leads to bullying tactics, intolerance and insensitivity. Rev M A Wilmshurst, Canterbury, Kent.

THE protests are borne not out of misbelief or militancy but of frustration and despair. As one who has attempted to initiate reasoned debate and dialogue to chal-

lenge the homophobia of the church, I bear testimony to the anguish that many lesbians and gay men feel. Julian Corlett, Scunthorpe, N Lincs.

I WAS horrified to read Ros Coward's inaccurate account (Out for approval, March 13). Coward failed to point out that the shout of "Out out out!" lasted for only a brief second, muffled by the applause and cheers of the congregation. This reaction echoes the public's perception of large homosexuality is now widely accepted, but the laws do not reflect public opinion. Ian Farmer, London.

WHAT happens to feminists in middle age? They stop believing in fairy tales and start going to church. Ros Coward's "analysis" of gay activism is founded upon the popular and useful stereotype of gays as arrested narcissists with a penchant for corruption. Ms Coward, having obviously given up critical thought for Lent, should now give up sermons. Dr Sally Mumt, Brighton.

COME on, Paul and Mark. It's time to wake up to the vacuousness of Old Compton Street and realise "infrastructure" means more than a hairdresser's, a taxi rank and a few coffee shops (just what Old Compton Street needs: another coffee shop). Where are the gay roadworkers, refuse collectors and police? Surely not in a gay restaurant, not "ever having to mix with heterosexuals". Keith Collins, Dagenham, Kent.



The spectre in the rear-view mirror

LAST week I spent some time in a magistrate's court listening to motoring cases. Most of the accused pleaded guilty to driving between 50mph and 107mph. All were young men wearing dark suits and white shirts. Their lives seemed to be spent driving up and down the motorways attending important meetings. The magistrate listened patiently to their almost identical pleas in mitigation. "I had a slight lapse in concentration; I was surprised when the officer told me my speed; I was trying to get clear of the traffic; I wanted to get home to see

my sick mother, grand-mother, parrot etc." Though these young men appeared quite harmless, humble and apologetic as they stood nervously in court, glad to pay a £250 fine, I wouldn't care to see any of them appearing in my rear view mirror if I was doing only 70mph in the outside lane of a motorway. R E Thornton, Birmingham.

Please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. The Country Diary is on page 10

Uncoupled

A GILL came out in the Sunday Times, says Libby Brooks in her piece (Two Love, Women, C2, April 9) on journalistic couples — and wasn't that a first? Well, no, he didn't. He made an extended and rather good joke about coming out. William Leith, says Libby Brooks, started the vogue for the confessional column. Well no, Libby: he didn't. Jack Trevor Story was writing much more extricatingly about his dreadful personal life 30 years ago in the Guardian, and I'm sure he wasn't the first. My wife, Nigella Lawson, and I write about each other, says Libby Brooks, in our Times columns. Well no: we don't. I mention Nigella from

time to time but because hers isn't any sort of confessional column she never mentions me. I have learned to live with it.

In short, a piece which purported to be about self-indulgent couples who regularly write about each other ("But why read about the colour of somebody's new carpet once when you can read about it twice") had one couple in which the partners had written about each other once, a number of couples in which one partner writes about the other without reciprocation, and two couples who share a byline.

It's not exactly what you'd call a thesis, is it? John Diamond, The Times, London.

Bayley falls off the roller coaster of public taste

ALL sympathy for Stephen Bayley (Dome-Laden, C2, April 13) evaporates in the poisonous atmosphere of his "diary". Having established himself as a ridiculous poseur, his bitchy personal remarks ("a scruffy monkey", "first impression of Jennie: noisy mouse, no slave to fashion or fitness") show him to be a snob to boot. He sneers "The Prime Minister... orders the nation to shut up and enjoy the sordid vulgarity... the other dictatorial government so keen to do things in the name of the 'People' used to use the word 'Volk'."

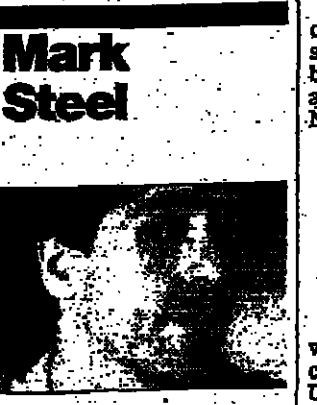
Looking behind this hysterical comment is the fact that Bayley's trend-mongering trade is now obsolete. Evidently, even politicians don't need "style gurus" anymore, which is why most of them have long since secured jobs as TV and radio presenters. Yet Bayley persists, a Canute-ish figure determined to repel the tides of mass communication, insisting that the

great unwashed need "creative" authorities like himself to tell them what they should and shouldn't like. Bayley may not "do" theme parks, but most Britons do. And we can tell a good one from a bad one without his help, thanks very much. Alex Sharkey, London.

If Stephen Bayley's knowledge of black culture in Britain is such that he thinks voodoo sacrifices regularly take place in Brixton, I for one do not regret his resignation from the Millennium Dome project. Ian Simpson, 15 Biffingham Road, London.

STEPHEN Bayley's supercilious, self-important Dome Diary achieved the impossible: it made Peter Mandelson seem likeable by comparison. Graham Larkhey, London.

Faux Irish



It shouldn't be surprising that suddenly everyone who spent years bugging up Ireland is hailed as "brave and courageous". But even Blair should have stopped short of praising John Major. Next he'll say: "Let us not forget the invaluable part played in the peace process by Oliver Cromwell, whose sensitivity has been an education to us all."

Perhaps now, as with all other Irish heroes, Major's special brand of bravery will be depicted on giant murals, and in bars from Kilburn to New York will be sung: *Here is the tale of brave Johnny Major Who stared at Dave Trimble and didn't flinch once, Defiant and proud, He cried out: I beg you, Please keep me in office for another six months.* Major is the whole peace process when, along with the Unionists he insisted there could be no talks until the IRA surrendered their weapons. Which is why he commissioned Senator Mitchell to act as referee, with his decisions to be final. But Mitchell concluded it didn't make sense to demand, so handover of weapons, so John Major went on: "Well, you know, best of three." And the first ceasefire collapsed. Much-praised Unionist MP

John Taylor has boasted that the new all-Ireland bodies represent little or no climbing on his part, as even on the Canal Management Authority "Unionists will be present at every meeting carrying a veto". I hope the nationalists have got a veto as well, or by the end of summer there'll be a large floating into Galway carrying a crew of drummers in bowler hats, commemorating victory in the "Battle over the Fenian who insisted that it wasn't his turn to do the lock" in 1258. Almost as daft is the praise heaped on Bertie Ahern for having the courage to concede amendments to the parts of the Irish constitution which claimed the six counties as part of Ireland. This concession needs to be placed in perspective. Southern Ireland is booming and Irish is the height of chic. For example, every new alcoholic product, no matter where it's made, is sold as essence of Ire-

land. If a new vodka came out at the moment it would be called "O'Heaney's oldie Blarney Juice, for the true taste of Limerick". Then there'd be another of those adverts which make you think that in Ireland, whether you were in a field, a lamenderie or a computer warehouse, within five minutes there'd be a horse galloping past. All around the world pubs are being given new names like "O'Doherty's" and "The Michael Collins and Firkin". Dublin has become a favourite destination for businessmen and posh stag nights, and company directors will soon be standing up at shareholders' meetings and saying: "The proposed merger offers excellent craic, and to outline the prospects I'll hand you over to yer man." The southern Irish government has never been as republican as its pretence. They were the first to ban

Sinn Féin from the media. But now, less than ever, would they want to jeopardise their new status by being merged with six counties of potential turmoil and high security costs. So when Bertie Ahern signed away the relevant articles two and three, he must have had the same feeling you get when you dump some old clothes at a charity shop. Everyone telling him how grateful they were and he was just thinking: "Thank Christ I've got rid of that old lot." The signatories have made tiny concessions because the momentum has forced them. This includes the British Government, which like someone with an old Jaguar, can't believe they went to so much trouble years ago to get the thing, when it now costs a fortune to keep it going and they can't get rid of it. But the reason people fought in the first place wasn't because of articles in

the Irish constitution or who ran the canal, but day-to-day discrimination, and brutality if anyone dared protest about it. The peace deal which would be the most valuable is one which should now be possible; between Catholics and Protestants agreeing that sectarianism benefits neither of them. The one worry about peace is that it will make fake Irishness more fashionable than ever, and we'll become like the Americans who insist that they're Irish. An American woman told me she was 70, Irish, and had just been to Ireland for the first time. She seemed unable to comprehend that these facts just aren't compatible. What is the matter with Americans that they're unable to grasp the difference between being from somewhere and being there once? Are they all like that? Does Neil Armstrong go around saying: "I'm from the moon, you know?"

SPRING OFFERS

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★ ★ ★ Julian
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ROME

1 night B&B
★ ★ Fiori
Additional nights £39
Heathrow, Gatwick & Manchester

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1 night B&B
★ ★ ★ Eurostar, £57 self drive
Additional nights £23

LILLE

1 night B&B
★ ★ ★ Eurostar
Additional nights £23

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Edna May Squires was born in a travelling van parked in a field in south Wales, the daughter of a roller man at the local steel works. She herself worked in a tinplate works before making her first public appearances at the Rhydallt Ballroom, Llanelli, as a singer with the local Denza Players.

By the following Christmas they were appearing together in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. She played Principal Boy and wangled him the part of the

As her singing career became ever more erratic the disputes and legal actions multiplied. She took to hiring the London Palladium — and other venues — for spectaculars starring herself. It appeared to be the only way she could still dominate the vari-

She sued a Sunday newspaper for suggesting she had corruptly influenced a disc jockey to play her records. She won £30,000 in damages, but wins tended to inflame her as destructively as her losses. Soon she was complaining of a conspiracy against her which spanned press, BBC and the entertainment industry.

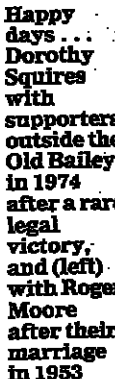
It got worse. She was fined

for kicking a taxi driver's head. The judge warned her that if she went on in such a fashion, she would end up in prison. She was fined for careless driving.

Many mishaps were connected with heavy drinking. In 1987 a High Court judge said that she had developed "a voracious appetite for litigation" after being told that, since 1971, she had launched at least 21 actions, many struck out because they were vexatious or frivolous. The judge ordered that she could not bring further cases without High Court consent.

Thus did she announce that she was leaving Britain for Malibu; but she was soon back. In 1988 she opened the new Barbican Centre in London with *An Evening of Dorothy Squires* and the following year she was last to receive the award, ominously entitled *I Am What I Am*.

Dorothy Squires, singer, born March 25, 1915; died April 14, 1998



Home boy

THROUGH feng shui I have taken more interest in my house and I am much more conscious of my surroundings. This has helped me turn my home into a warmer, more personal place. I now spend more time at home and this helped me to connect with a wonderful sanctuary to create a balance between the hectic world of music, DJ work and interviews, with the more spiritual side of life.

I feel that a harmonious balance between work, my social life and my family is what I need. My tranquility in life helped me in terms of emotional and physical well

Fat of the land

THE problem is — consumption and progress aren't the same thing. A commuter on a six-lane Los Angeles highway in rush hour goes as slowly as a horse and carriage. Happiness levels don't improve because you get a new TV. Studies show that people are as unhappy in consumer societies as in poor ones.

Over the last 50 years, we've consumed more of the world's resources than all previous generations put together. There are so many

information than the average person in 17th century England did in a lifetime. But 24 hours from now, you'll have forgotten 60 per cent of it (including this editorial). *From the latest issue of Colors, I think.*

aged up in Banhaus design. You fly under the protective talismans of the Stuttgart coat of arms, with its rampant black horse on a yellow shield, surrounded by the colours and six stag horns from the crest of the state of Baden-Württemberg. You are part of the chosen, the post-modern future. You rule. The need for speed in i-D.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@urlican.co.uk, fax 0171 753 4866; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 113 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

years ago were wrong. The first ever Aldermaston march was indeed in 1958, but it was organised by the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War, it went from London to Aldermaston, and was supported by the newly-formed CND. From 1958 on, CND held their own marches, but in the opposite direction, ending in the capital.

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A Country Diary

VALE OF AYLESBURY: It has always been one of those places that might be the site for a parable. Ford (pronounced Frawd, by the oldest locals) is a remote and low-lying village in the Vale and full of tales. Until the last war the parish had no main street, no shops, no head fritillaries. On maps it was called Frogcup Meadow, (Frawcup to the locals) and every second Sunday in May it was thrown open so that people could pick the plants, mushrooms, room-chequered bells in return for donations to charity. Villagers can still remember the congregations of pickers swarming amongst the millions of flowers, the picnics, the plants sneaked out for garden borders. Then in the fifties, like so many fritillary sites across the country, Frawcup Meadow was taken over by the council and the flowers all but vanished. But there were always a few clumps on a piece of dampy waste ground by the side of the road. In Aylesbury, the town of the Roman name, I can remember the old madman, I can remember my own excite-

ment when I first came across these flowers, thinking I had rediscovered the species for Bucks (and being rapidly corrected by two old boys leaning on a gate, who knew their local story). Then, visiting last week (trawpups blown away), I found the site destroyed, not by building or ploughing, but what seemed ironically far worse — an intensively tidied plantation of amenity trees. Behind the vandalism was a catalogue of casualness and communication breakdown: the plants known to local biologists but somehow not on their computer records, the local authority ignorant of the site, the landowner uninterested in the fritillaries — or regarding tree-planting as an unequalled environmental improvement. The last year of the fritillary's 50-old national sites vanishes for so too common a reason — because the small, the locally-loved, the culturally rich aren't thought to matter. Conservation's great enemy: aesthetic

RICHARD MAREY

PRODIGE, John, died peacefully 7th April 1988. Dearly loved husband of Betty, mother of 4, and devoted Grandfather. Aged 68. Funeral service at Llanrwst Methodist Church, 12.30pm, Friday 17th April. Burial in Llanrwst Cemetery. Flowers by arrangement to H. Eves & Sons 01491 697340

REDA, John, born 1945, died 16th April 1988 in hospital on 10th April 1988. He was a brave and honorable man, he will be missed by all. Funeral service Crematorium, Rhyl, on Friday 17th April at 5.00pm. A service for details at Wickhampton 0161 676 7176.

In Memoriam

READING, George Arthur. Died the 29th, today, 1981, loved and remembered as a good friend.

READING, George, a lovely man and a good friend. Remembered today and always.

£10 to place your announcement telephone 0171 35 4657 or text 0171 713 4126 between

[illegible]

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(Frampcut to the locals) and every second Sunday in May it was thrown open so that people could pick the exquisite meadow-scented flowers. The village, by domesticated church and vicar, can still remember the congregations of pickers swarming amongst the millions of flowers, the picnics, the plants, the meadow-scented flowers, the meadow-scented flowers, the meadow-scented flowers. Then in the fifties, like so many of the other villages in the country, Frampcut Meadow was drained, ploughed and sprayed, and the flowers all but van- ished. There were always a few clumps on picnic grounds, but the meadow was ground by the side of the lane to Aston Milling — a remnant of the old meadow. I can remember my own excite-

what seemed ironically far worse — an intensively tidied plantation of amenity trees. Behind the vandalism was a catalogues raisonné and communication breakdown: the plants known to local biologists but somehow not on their computer records, the local authority ignorant of the site, the landowner uninterested in the fritillaries — or regarding tree-planting as an unqualified environmental good. And so another one of the fritillary's 20-odd national sites vanishes for a time, to be replaced, perhaps, because the small, the locally-loved, the culturally rich aren't thought to matter in conservation's great scientific arena.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of risk factors for coronary artery disease between two groups of men who had been exposed to asbestos. The subjects included 60 men who had worked in an asbestos vermiculite mine and 60 men who had worked in a vermiculite mine without asbestos exposure. The subjects were matched by age, education, and smoking status. Data were obtained from medical history questionnaires, physical examinations, chest x-rays, electrocardiograms, and echocardiograms. The prevalence of hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, and cigarette smoking was similar in both groups. There were no significant differences in the prevalence of left ventricular hypertrophy or left ventricular wall thickness between the two groups. The prevalence of aortic calcification was significantly higher in the asbestos-exposed group than in the nonexposed group.

Keywords: Asbestos; Coronary artery disease; Risk factors; Vermiculite mine workers.

Asbestos has been classified as a known human carcinogen because of its association with lung cancer and mesothelioma (National Cancer Institute, 1987). In addition, asbestos has been associated with other diseases such as asbestosis, pleural plaques, and peritoneal cancer (Brenner & Selman, 1986).

There have been reports suggesting that asbestos may also be associated with cardiovascular disease. In a case-control study, Selman et al. (1982) found that men who had worked in asbestos mines had a higher prevalence of coronary artery disease than men who had not worked in asbestos mines. In another study, Selman et al. (1984) found that men who had worked in asbestos mines had a higher prevalence of atherosclerosis than men who had not worked in asbestos mines. In a third study, Selman et al. (1986) found that men who had worked in asbestos mines had a higher prevalence of left ventricular hypertrophy than men who had not worked in asbestos mines.

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Analysis Eating out

Chilling the soup, the wine – and the profits

Several trendy London restaurants have closed within months of being launched. Yet other new ventures are not short of investors. Is this a hiccup or a harbinger of the next recession? Ruaridh Nicoll investigates



The book of calm
8

HARD to imagine a couple of scallops, some pea purée and a pool of mint vinaigrette dragging one of London's top restaurants through a recession but, at £8.50, Rowley Leigh, the owner of Kensington Place, believes the starter helped. Londoners peering in from the drabness of wet, winter London through Kensington Place's plate glass windows at the colourful, constantly shifting interior are seeing one of the most successful of the truly new British restaurants.

Yet more recent high profile openings often seem doomed to fail. While Damien Hirst's Pharmacy is doing well, the restaurant that occupied the same site in Notting Hill, Centro 50, failed in a year. DCO, in super fashionable Clerkenwell, did not see two seasons pass as did Christopher's, a Chelsea tait joint, which again fell after six months. Kassoulet, Tabac – also in the super-cool Notting Hill/Portobello area – and Gabriel's are all gone.

"Restaurants are very good indicators and I would say people should be very nervous," said Leigh. Are the failures the first sign that all is not well in the world? Last weekend brought news that Villandry, which serves up simple but superb Mediterranean food, had stumbled and was about to fail. The owner, Jean-Charles Carrini, had moved from Marylebone to larger premises near Great Portland Street – an upcoming area of London and faced difficulties because of a delayed opening.

burgh. Sir Terence Conran was redesigning the nation's living rooms rather than its citizens' interiors. Since then the number of cafes, restaurants and bars in London have doubled to 6,000. With them has come experimental cooking, beautifully designed spaces, atmosphere and experience. The restaurant as theatre. "Restaurants have become a new way of spending an evening," said Victoria Parnis of Conran's restaurant division.

Conran may be credited with revolutionising the way those on middle incomes eat, but with the Blueprint Cafe, his first venture in 1989, he arrived two years after Kensington Place.

Leigh says that he "would rather be in the restaurant business" than almost any other despite its ups and downs. He claims that even through the darkest days of last recession he felt sure that Kensington Place would prosper and stay full. He was right.

Leigh does not buy into the 'Cool Britannia' view of British restaurants leading the world. He lists the names of cities he would rather eat out in and stops short only when reaching the capitals of small African countries. What he does acknowledge is that the market he serves has changed dramatically.

After the second world war, eating out as a leisure activity started, growing slowly until the 1980s arrived when it boomed. The number of meals served in restaurants rose by a third between 1985 and 1995.2, and just in London 50 new restaurants open every week, leaving a few happy chefs and, a few months later, some very broke owners.

Another £75,000 went in legal bills. £90,000 for the David Chipperfield design and £170,000 for the kitchen.

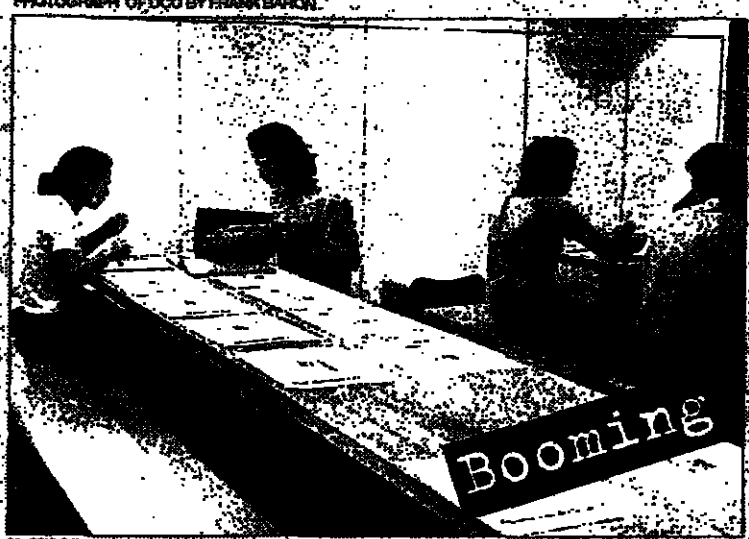
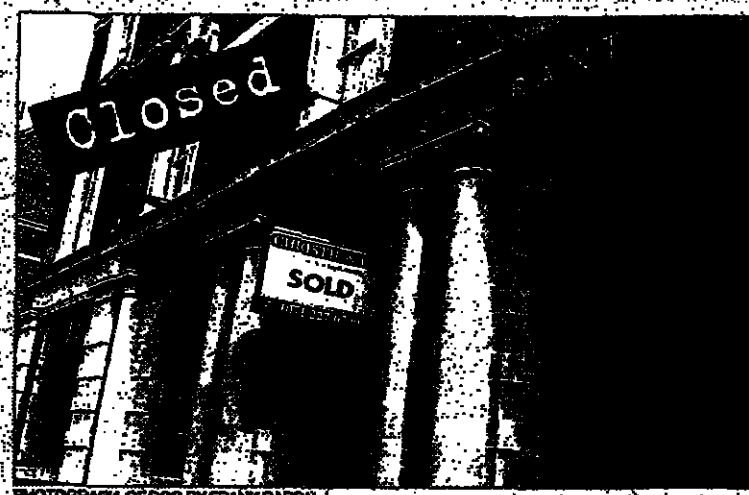
The Portobello Business Centre, which is aiding a new start up of a less extravagant restaurant in its area, has projected annual staff costs for £235,950 and general costs of £284,000. They are hoping for a profit of £119,070 assuming a good start.

A few months ago Britain passed an important point in its culinary life. The average family ate one meal every week which was prepared outside the home. "It really is a landmark," said Justin Worsley of The Henley Centre, which studies consumer trends. "Although compared with the American market we have just made first base."

The people who are rising to the challenge of feeding the people come in two types. One is the chef who decides to offer up his or her creativity for his own gain. The other are the well funded big groups who can afford to test the market to see what happens.

While groups like Whitbread run major chains across the country, owning brands like Pizza Hut and Beefeaters, they have up to 20 other single restaurants being tested out.

Bass is currently testing a concept brought from America called Dave and Busters which they have based in Solihull. The idea is to have a restaurant in faux 1930s art deco serving up burgers and fries surrounded by an amusement arcade, blackjack tables (with fake money) and a bowling alley. According to the industry the idea is 'hot'.



Running the tab...

Location: Portobello, W11	Type of cuisine: Japanese/Australian
Status: Independent	Finances: Owner injects capital
No of seats: 70	Source of finance: Bank loan
Equipment & furniture: £20,000	Staff: £20,000
Signage & shop front: £2,000	Food: £2,000
Bar stock (including opening): £2,000	Other: £2,000
Total: £335,000	

...after a good start

Total sales	£881,618
Cost of sales	£335,877
Running costs complete	£426,670
Profit before tax	£119,070

Professor

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Rugby Union

Welsh clubs call off strike threat

Paul Rees

WALE'S Premier Division clubs last night called off their threatened strike this Saturday following a four-hour meeting with the Welsh Rugby Union which broke up with the two sides agreeing a truce in their dispute over money and control of the professional game.

The clubs threatened to strike after the union insisted all eight of them sign 10-year contracts, pledging their loyalty to the governing body in return for revenue generated by the competitions they played in.

The eight said the union's demand was provocative given that they considered the £400,000 they will receive this season was insufficient to support full-time professional squads. They also felt the fixture list, with just 14 league matches and a Challenge Trophy tournament which included Spain, Canada and provincial teams from Argentina, was causing spectators to turn their backs on the game.

The clubs also wanted a say in the running of the competitions, especially the Welsh League which has not had a sponsor for two years. The union initially refused to meet with them, but when the strike threat was made by the chairman of the Premier clubs' group, Eddie Jones, talks were hastily arranged yesterday.

Some progress was made, said Jones, who met with the union's chairman Giamnor Griffiths, its secretary Dennis Gethin and its director of rugby Terry Cobner. "I was reasonably pleased with the way things went and there will not be a strike this Saturday. That does not mean to say there will not be one in the future."

"We have to impress upon the union the need to improve the club game in Wales, both to help the finances of the major clubs, many of whom face bankruptcy unless they start bringing in more money, and to help prepare players better for the international area. Wales's 51-0 defeat against France this month showed just how far behind we have fallen."

Jones said preliminary talks had been held with clubs in England about the possibility of starting an Anglo-Welsh League as early as next season. "As a group of clubs, our immediate aims are threefold: to see the English clubs end their boycott of the Heineken Cup; to set up an Anglo-Welsh League and to see Cardiff's dispute with the WRU resolved."

Meanwhile, Pontypridd's young full-back Kevin Morgan, is the latest player to be doubtful for Wales's summer tour of South Africa. Morgan, who is considering surgery for persistent shoulder problems, joins an injury list that includes Neil Jenkins and Scott Gibbs.

Bristol, facing relegation from Premiership One, go into tonight's league game against Sale with problems on and off the pitch.

Bristol, reeling after a club record eight successive league defeats, have several key personnel yet to agree new contracts. They include their captain Robert Jones and the Ireland internationals Paul Burke and Kevin Maggs.

A Good Friday deadline passed without agreement between the club and around 12 squad members, although further negotiations are planned.



Muscled out... Bob Dwyer hands out instructions to the Leicester team but his predecessor Tony Russ says his dismissal reeked of player power

Russ savages ruthless Tigers

Paul Rees on the former coach's attack on player-power at Welford Road

LEICESTER face a summer of discontent after a campaign without a trophy and the controversial sacking of the club's rugby director Bob Dwyer two months ago.

The attempt of one shareholder to force an extraordinary general meeting to discuss the running of the club may have failed because he did not get the requisite support, but forces are being mobilised for the club's annual general meeting in the summer.

Dwyer's predecessor Tony Russ, who was sacked two years ago, has set the tone for the malcontents by launching a bitter attack on the way Leicester is run, saying the once family club has been turned into cold marketing operation and that the whole

ethos of the club has changed for the worse.

"The whole club has changed dramatically over the last seven years," said Russ, who is currently the director of rugby at Waterlool, in the latest issue of Rugby News magazine. "From the inside, people tell me it is a pretty unpleasant place to be. I am surprised at Dwyer's dismissal but not at the way it happened. Leicester have become very good at mishandling difficult situations and have completely lost the club feeling they once had. All decisions are taken on a marketing basis and you cannot run a rugby team like that."

The management committee looks stupid and they have come out of this with a lack of respect. They have not explained their actions. There



Tony Russ... suspicious

has to be a reason none of us knows about. There has to be something going on. If a coach deserves to go, fair enough, but for just a couple of bad matches?"

Russ said he detected the odour of player power. "Dwyer rattled a few cages.

He dumped players like Dean Richards, Rory Underwood, Steve Hackney and Aled Karadool, all old hands he did not want. That diminished player power but when things started going against him, it reared its head again. That is bad management in my book. When player power comes to the fore, you get rid of the players, not the coach."

Russ said he was not convinced by the coaching triumvirate Leicester have appointed following Dwyer's sacking: Dean Richards, Joel Stranksy and John Wells. "Dean has got the capability to coach and I suppose he was the obvious choice in the short-term, but the three-man set-up worries me. I would not have thought the coaching strategies of Wells and Stranksy would be similar."

They were out of the race for the league a long time ago. "I think Dean is a potential manager in the Fran Cotton mould. People will listen to him when he talks and he has got what it takes, that great ability to put his thoughts across and motivate players. His opinions might not be in line with current thinking but there is more than one way to win a rugby match."

The attempt by one shareholder to force an emergency meeting failed because he needed to get 10 per cent of the shareholders to support his motion, but he only managed to persuade three per cent. The club has yet to fix a date for its annual meeting but it will be held in the summer and supporters have said they will be demanding an explanation for the sacking of Dwyer, the former Australia coach under whom Leicester won the Pilkington Cup and reached the final of the Heineken Cup last season.

Rugby League

Gibbons denies racial abuse

Andy Wilson

THE Rugby Football League yesterday pledged a full and thorough investigation into the British game's first dismissal for alleged racial abuse.

The incident occurred in Monday night's Second Division match between Bramley and Doncaster at Headingley when Anthony Gibbons, a 22-year-old full-back who joined Bramley from Leeds last year, was one of three players sent off. The referee Nick Oddy said afterwards that Gibbons had been dismissed for "verbal racial abuse".

However, Gibbons yesterday denied the charges. "It was just a bit of a fracas and the referee must have thought I was hurling abuse and I wasn't," he said. "A few blokes must have said something. I was sent off for the wrong reason. I can't remember much about it. There was a bit of pushing and pulling but any suggestion I said anything racial is rubbish."

Bramley, Doncaster and Geoff Berry, the RFL's controller of referees, will now wait for Oddy's official match report before making any further comment. Peter Rowe, the League's media manager, stressed no action can be taken until Gibbons appears before a disciplinary committee on Thursday next week.

However, Rowe added: "Any incident of this alleged nature, whether committed by players, supporters or officials, will be taken very seriously. We pride ourselves on our work with the Commission for Racial Equality in stamping racism out of our sport."

Thanks mainly to the work of Neil Tunnick, who has since succeeded Maurice Lindsay as chief executive, the RFL recently conducted a major survey into racial atti-

tudes within the game and last year published a 12-point action plan. Point six states that, "Clubs will insist upon a code of conduct for players and officials which prohibits them from making racially abusive remarks against fellow players, supporters and officials at any time." So if Gibbons is found guilty, he can expect punishment from Bramley and the league.

Sonny Nickle, the Bradford Bulls second-row, who also has six Great Britain caps, also rejected suggestions that the game has a racial problem. "I can't remember the last time anyone said anything to me," he said last night. "So as far as I'm concerned it's not a big problem in the game. In all my career I haven't come across any one player, club or set of fans who always give me stick."

Nickle himself has to appear before the disciplinary committee tomorrow after being sent off following a scuffle with Leeds's Kiwi centre Richie Blackmore at Odsal on Sunday night. However, Blackmore, who seemed fortunate to escape with a sin-binning for his part in the incident, may also be asked to attend after the game's executive committee studies a video of the match this morning.

The RFL confirmed yesterday that it has the power to discipline Blackmore even though Bradford's coach, Matthew Elliott was "satisfied" with the punishment meted out by Sunday's referee Stuart Cummings. A suspension of two matches or more would rule Blackmore out of next week's Anzac Day Test between New Zealand and Australia in Auckland.

The executive committee will also study the incident which led to Warrington's prop Adam Fogarty, currently starring in Emmerdale as Kathy's latest love interest, being placed on report on Good Friday against Salford.

Leeds admit Wales have been on hunt for Harris

THE Leeds chief executive Gary Hetherington yesterday dismissed a new approach by the Welsh Rugby Union to sign Iestyn Harris before the 1999 World Cup, writes Andy Wilson.

Hetherington revealed that Terry Cobner, Wales's director of rugby, had recently travelled to Headingley to enquire about the 21-year-old, who was born in Oldham but whose family's Welsh roots allowed him to play for Wales in the 1995 rugby league World Cup.

"Terry did come up for a meeting but we both agreed it wasn't a goer," said Hetherington. "Iestyn signed a five-year contract with us

last year, and his priorities are with the Leeds Rhinos, Great Britain and Welsh rugby league - as he showed with his hat-trick at Bradford on Sunday night."

"The only way out would be for Wales to buy him, like they did with Scott Gibbs. And I'm not sure there's enough money in The Valleys for that."

"It's not as though he's a Welsh lad and a former rugby star for Wales in the 1995 rugby league World Cup. Terry did come up for a meeting but we both agreed it wasn't a goer," said Hetherington. "Iestyn signed a five-year contract with us

Boxing

I'll put Hamed away, says Vazquez

AS A professional boxer, Wilfredo Vazquez has been absorbing blows of varying intensity for 17 years. But his task-tough face shows a deeper pain when asked how he started upon the hazardous journey he believes will culminate in the acquisition of Naseem Hamed's World Boxing Organisation featherweight title when the two men meet in Manchester on Saturday.

"It was the death of my father. His idol was Wilfredo Gomez, who he thought was the greatest fighter Puerto Rico ever had. In 1978 he had a ticket for the Gomez title fight against the Mexican Carlos Zarate, but a week before the fight he died from a heart attack. I knew then I had to become a boxer for him."

Gomez, then the World Boxing Council super-bantamweight champion, stopped the WBO bantamweight title holder Zarate in five rounds. To the Hispanic world this fight was the Ali-Frazier of the little men and victory guaranteed Gomez sporting immortality in Puerto Rico.

Vazquez, ancient at 37 in featherweight years, would

John Rawling meets the proud champion aiming for nothing less than a knockout victory on Saturday



Vazquez... seen it all

rank alongside his father's hero if he could end Hamed's reign. He is already the first man to hold World Boxing Association championship belts at three weights, yet he has been stripped of the featherweight title for electing to face Hamed instead of the WBA's mandatory challenger.

Rarely have boxing's shabby alphabet-boys made a more shameful decision. A veteran of 60 professional fights and 19 WBA title fights, Vazquez elected to surrender his title for the biggest payday of his life and the chance

of his greatest victory. "Yes, it hurt when the WBA took the title off me," he said, "but everybody knows this will prove who is the best featherweight in the world. If I win it would mean a lot to me, and I know my father would be proud of me and what I have achieved."

In Hamed he acknowledges that he is taking on "a superstar" and he suspects, perhaps with justification, that he will need to stop the champion rather than rely on the vagaries of the judges' scorecards.

"I don't think I can expect a fair deal if the fight goes the

distance," he remarks with the dispassionate insight of a "seen it all, done it all" veteran.

Vazquez, a quietly spoken family man, has left his wife and three sons at home for his first visit to Britain. "Sometimes they come, but this is business," he explained. "I have been training since January and I cannot afford distractions. I have prepared to win by knockout. Everybody knows Hamed can go down, but now he is facing the best contender he has ever met and the biggest puncher."

Cynics suggest Vazquez is here merely to secure his pension. Those who saw his most recent title defence, a ponderous 12-round points win over Genaro Rios in Las Vegas last November, say he is tailor-made for Hamed, but his certainty of purpose commands respect.

"When I said him, I'll finish him and put him completely out," he declared yesterday. "I want everyone in Britain to remember me the right way, to like me. And if you say I am past my best, just remember Evander Holyfield and George Foreman. Forget age. I am ready."

Cricket

Surrey agree to rest Stewart

THE England opener Alec Stewart will not be available for Surrey's first two County Championship fixtures this month following a request from Lord's that he is rested.

The chairman of selectors David Davies, who has England's coach David Lloyd asked Surrey not to pick Stewart until after April 25, and his county have agreed to give the wicketkeeper-batsman a chance to recover from a hectic winter of touring.

Stewart, the only England player to be involved in every international match in Sharjah and the West Indies, will miss Surrey's championship fixtures against Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

An unbeaten 75 from Sussex's new batsman Michael Bevan helped Australia to a four-wicket win over India to clinch the one-day for the triangular one-day series in Sharjah, starting later this week. Harvey, on holiday in the Maldives, will fly directly to Sharjah as cover for the injured spinner Shane Warne and all-rounder Tom Moody.

The South Australian spinner Brad Young has also been placed on standby in case a second player is needed. The Australian management in India will decide "in the next few days" whether Moody, who has a hamstring injury, and Warne, who has shoulder-ligament problems, remain with the side for the tournament against India and New Zealand.

Team talk

The independent news and reports service

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Snooker

Wayward Hunter's pot proves expensive

Clive Everton

PAUL HUNTER was yesterday fined £4,500 after testing positive for marijuana at the grand prix at Bournemouth last October.

The 19-year-old from Leeds must merely give up his prize money for reaching the last 16 but the loss of the accompanying £1,140 ranking points drops him from 19th to 24th in the world rankings. He won his first world-ranking event, the Regal Welsh Open, in January.

Hunter also appeared before the disciplinary committee in January 1996. He was fined £2,500 then (£2,000 suspended for 12 months) after

striking six months earlier at the Blackpool qualifying school.

Hunter has failed to qualify for the Embassy World Championship starting in Sheffield on Saturday and his last playing appearance came in Plymouth recently, when he lost in the first round of the British Open.

Two other players were punished by the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association disciplinary committee in Bristol yesterday. Chris Scanlon was fined the £150 and 400 ranking points he earned in the International Open in 1994 after also testing positive for marijuana six months earlier. Stephen Ormerod, the

world No. 308, was fined £300 with £200 costs for testing positive last October for marijuana and non-androsterone, the 21-year-old has no prize money to speak of.

The time-lag between tests and hearing indicates inefficiency. The UK Sports Council has confirmed that results are invariably notified to governing bodies within 14 days.

Peter Gilchrist, the world billiards No. 3 and chairman of the WPBSA's billiards committee, was fined £100 with £150 costs for taking a cold cure which included ephedrine. Gilchrist also tested positive on October 29 - after playing Ormerod in the Benson & Hedges satellite event in Malvern.

Free, with this week's Observer, the ultimate 1970 World Cup souvenir.

The Observer

Start collecting the first of seven reprinted 1970 World Cup match programmes, complete with Observer match reports from the time, exclusively this Sunday.

Outsider surprises Nell Gwyn, page 13
New voice at Newcastle, page 14

Stam heads for Old Trafford, page 14
Full-back denies race abuse, page 15

SportsGuardian

Cricket season off to a damp start at Fenner's



Stop-go... for the Cambridge University and Northamptonshire teams yesterday. Absent spectators demonstrated more faith in the weather forecast. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Memories come flooding back as April snow-showers keep Cambridge in the pavilion

David Foot sees little sign of a dynamic rethink in the English game on opening day

THE Fenner's floods disappeared, miraculously forked into recession by the ground staff, and a sprinkling of snow came instead to the outfield. Cricket was back.

We looked in vain for a hospitable shaft of sunshine to herald a new summer's play. Was this really the 150th year of

cricket at Fenner's? The few spectators, hunched in anoraks like third sweat-ers, had time as they waited yesterday to reflect on days when Cambridge glittered with such riches that one could predict Test stars and see counties capitulate.

Play began at 1pm, though you would never have known from the long-snow-

ing hands of the pavilion clock. What followed, after Northamptonshire were put into bat, carried the tentative cold-fingered circum-spection of mid-April.

So it was left instead to the imagination. We thought again of Ossie Wheatley, all wild blond hair and rosy complexion, plundering opposing in-

nings in the late Fifties, of Peter May's peerless on-drives and the stylish brava-do of Ted Dexter's strokes through the covers.

Each year at this time we ask ourselves whether University cricket retains any genuine purpose as part of the first-class structure. Oxford and Cambridge, with brave intent rather

than much sign of eloquent practical argument, sustain the civilised charade.

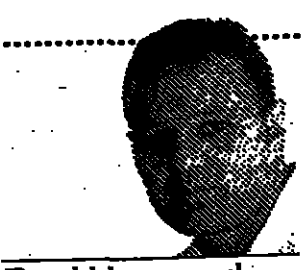
Northants scored 123 in the 42 overs possible. Richard Montgomerie scored 46 with singular caution; their new skipper Kevin Curran reached 41, though he should have been caught at long-off to give the New Zealand leg spinner Greg Loveridge a wicket early on.

As the tea-time covers came on and the dons went

home to their faded Wis-dens, cricket was supposed-ly on its way again — in a damp-squib sequel to stir-ling words of revolution and rethink.

For this season, after the anti-climactic Caribbean tour, it is more than ever thinking times for cricket. Unfortunately the relentless clouds and empty beer-tent were not the most uplifting of forward-looking symbols at Fenner's yesterday.

Cheesehead discovers a Nou flavour



Paul Hayward

BARCELONA and Real Madrid take turns to be the terrors of the Nou Camp. But we know which team, which tribe, is plunging the sword in now. Catalonia is 14 points clear of Castell with five games left and should wrap up Spain's Primera Liga this weekend. Gone are the banners which advised Barca's Dutch coach, Louis Van Gaal: "Cheesehead. Go Home."

When 115,000 white hand-kerchiefs stir the air in the glorious Nou Camp stadium the coach knows the tornado is close behind.

From Barcelona fans it is the gentlest expression of a raging disgust. In the war-torn-inducing bull-ring of Catalan passions a manager is reduced to a tiny fleck, roaming the touchline alone and unloved.

He carries the sometimes dehumanising burden of fulfilling the boundless desires of supporters whose very identity and self-esteem are bound up with the fortunes of those 11 Catalan warriors on the pitch.

Reasoning with the supporters and the media is about as productive as delivering a sermon on a Heathrow runway. Bobby Robson tried rationality for a while last year but discovered that the only criterion on the terraces is results. Barca's 103,000 paid-up members don't care that Real Madrid take 2-0 lead into the second leg of their European Cup semi-final at Borussia Dortmund tonight. "The White Enemy" are welcome to it. All Barcelona are interested in is impaling Franco's favourite club on their own royal blade.

In January Senor Cheesehead almost ended up in the fondue. The side he inherited from Robson had been woeful in the Champions League and had even lost to Newcastle. They were beaten 3-0 away by Dynamo Kiev and 4-0 at home in the return.

They conceded 14 goals in six games in Europe and won only once. The players appeared bemused by the system Van Gaal brought with him from Ajax and there was talk of Robson (by now the director of football) leaping in the elevator and racing down a floor

to reclaim his old post of first-team coach.

January was a wreck. Barca were 3-1 up at Salamanca with 11 minutes to go and lost 4-1. They were 2-0 ahead at Real Sociedad with eight minutes on the clock but ended up drawing 2-2. With a 3-0 advantage against Valencia in the Nou Camp they imploded to lose 4-3, then they lost 3-1 against Deportivo La Coruna to finish the month with one point from a possible 12.

Van Gaal went the colour of those hankies bidding him a cold farewell.

When a local opinion poll showed that 73 per cent of the supporters blamed the coach, the club's resident prima donna Hristo Stoichkov muttered publicly: "The fans can't be wrong."

They can, as it happens, especially in a stadium of 100,000-plus drama queens, where the first club president was the aptly named Walter Wild.

Robson got the same treatment, and worse. His Barcelona side won 23 of their last 25 games and brought the Spanish Cup, European Super Cup and Cup Winners' Cup back to the Nou Camp. Yet Robson was sacked to make way for Van Gaal, and last month finally fluttered away from Spain to return to PSV Eindhoven in Van Gaal's homeland.

This was the waning of a dream Robson had probably long held: that a tearfully contrite club president (Josep Lluís Núñez) would beg him to return from internal exile and clean up Van Gaal's mess.

LI. Barcelona's championship-winning coaches in modern times have been foreigners: Johan Cruyff, Terry Venables, Rinus Michels and Helenio Herrera.

Núñez wants to extend Van Gaal's contract beyond the year 2001, but a contract in Spanish football are about as binding as chocolate string. Van Gaal, too erect and austere to be loved by Catalans, has been helped by the poor form of both Real and their free-spending neighbours Atletico Madrid, but has over-come the loss of Ronaldo to Internazionale to spectacular effect and has completed a league double over the hated royalists from the Bernabéu.

People say the Premier League is dominated by a cabal, but compared with Spain our top division is Plato's Democracy. Between them Barcelona and Real Madrid have won 38 of the last 51 championships.

This year's Barca-Real feud is nearly over. Cheeseheads 1, Crowned Heads 0.

Hoddle puts his foot down

David Lacey on the England coach's World Cup warning to players — and to their clubs

ANY player who fails to report for England duty next Sunday will risk missing the World Cup unless he is physically incapable of travelling. And it will not be enough to turn up with a sick note and return to his club the following morning.

Glenn Hoddle regards the warm-up game against Portugal at Wembley next Wednesday as the start of England's serious World Cup preparations. He will name his squad for France in seven weeks and cannot afford a repeat of the farce which preceded the friendly in Switzerland last month, when nine players withdrew with injuries but most of them played the following weekend.

After announcing a party of 34 yesterday for the Portugal game the England coach spelled out the situation to any potential absentees. "This is a get-together with one eye on the final 22," said Hoddle, "and I expect all the players to be there. I'm surely not asking for too much to get a group of 30-odd players together two months before the World Cup finals."

"I don't envisage anyone pulling out. If they do, they would be foolish unless they're in plaster or in hospital, or can't travel because they're ill. But it must be serious — a serious reason why they can't get on a train or plane or get into a car."

England 34 for Portugal and Lacey's pick for France

CUP PROBABLES		Club	Age	1-11	Sub	Caps	Goals
Name							
David Seaman		Arsenal	34	35	3	35	—
Tim Flowers		Blackburn	31	10	—	10	—
Tony Adams		Arsenal	31	49	—	49	1
Markie Keown		Arsenal	31	15	1	16	—
Garroth Southgate		Aston Villa	27	20	3	23	—
Soi Campbell		Tottenham	23	10	3	13	—
Gary Neville		Man Utd	23	22	2	24	—
Phil Neville		Man Utd	21	8	1	9	—
Andy Hinchcliffe		Sheff Wed	29	20	2	22	1
Graeme Le Saux		Sheff Wed	29	5	—	5	—
Paul Gascoigne		Man Utd	22	11	1	12	—
David Beckham		Middlesbro	30	44	10	54	10
Paul Scholes		Liverpool	30	35	2	37	2
Paul Ince		Liverpool	29	22	7	29	—
David Batty		Liverpool	26	16	4	20	—
Steve McManaman		Man Utd	32	4	1	5	3
Paul Scholes		Man Utd	23	24	7	31	8
Teddy Sheringham		Newcastle	27	35	2	37	16
Alan Shearer		Newcastle	27	35	2	37	16

CUP POSSIBLES		Club	Age	1-11	Sub	Caps	Goals
Name							
Nigel Martyn		Leeds	31	5	1	6	—
Rio Ferdinand		West Ham	19	1	1	2	—
Robert Lee		Newcastle	32	11	5	16	2
Nicky Butt		Man Utd	23	1	4	5	—
Jamie Redknapp		Liverpool	24	5	3	8	—
Ray Parlour		Arsenal	25	—	—	—	—
Ian Wright		Arsenal	34	15	14	29	9
Andy Cole		Man Utd	26	—	2	2	—
Michael Owen		Liverpool	18	2	—	2	—
Ron Robbin		Coventry	26	1	1	1	—
Paul Merson		Middlesbro	30	7	9	16	2

UNLIKELY LADS

Ian Walker Tottenham 26 1 2 3 —

Kevin Pressman Sheff Wed 30 — — — —

Stuart Pearce Newcastle 35 72 4 76 5

Dominic Matteo Liverpool 23 — — — —

Les Ferdinand Tottenham 31 12 2 14 5

It looks as if Hoddle has already made up his mind about Blackburn's Chris Sutton, Chelsea's Dennis Wise, Gary Pallister of United and Aston Villa's Stan Collymore — none made even this big squad. "If they're not in today, I think they can start booking their holidays unless we get 14 or 15 injuries in the same positions," Hoddle said.

For Sutton, who refused to play for England B, the air must still be heavy with the smell of burned-out boats.

Portugal's coach Humberto Coelho sprung few surprises in his squad. He picked the midfielder Jose Calado after a three-year absence from the national side. Calado, 24, has impressed with Benfica under Graeme Souness and may play in a strong midfield featuring Paulo Sousa, Rui Costa and Luis Figo. Jorge Cadete, the former Celtic striker now with Celta Vigo, is also in the 18-man party.

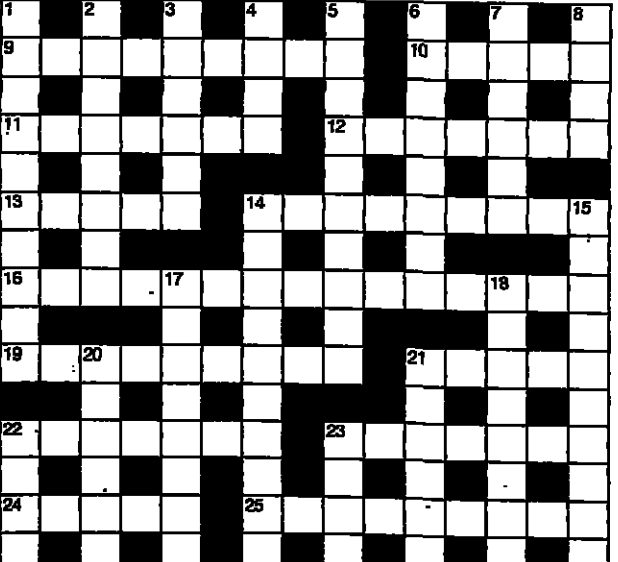
Scottish squad, page 14



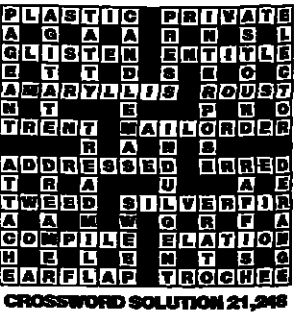
Hoddle... exasperation

Guardian Crossword No 21,249

Set by Paul



- Across
- 9, 25, 7, 23 down, 6, 16 Oh, Heavenly Father — all We take bread and water from you "I'll turn" luck is realised (5, 4, 2, 3, 5, 2, 7, 3, 3, 4, 4, 2, 5, 8)
 - 10 Sign Russian agreement without historians (5)
 - 11 Make tea with sort of domestic appliance (7)
 - 12 Painter shortly might need a pen (7)
 - 13 Blackwood, by one trick? (5)
 - 14 Dubious character suggests Hess, and is dubious (5)
 - 16 See 9
 - 19 Small coming from nourishment to put in our London plates (4, 5)
 - 21 He painted people from different worlds (5)
 - 22 Between Monday and the end of work, that is, about Wed. perhaps? (7)
- Down
- 1 Improvised links might be taken from here (3, 3, 4)
 - 2 See 9
 - 3 Talkative, like a bird? (5)
 - 4 Leading light? (4)
 - 5 We take the water out the way it arrives? (3, 7)
 - 6 An idiot falls with another D. (8)
 - 7 See 9
- 23 Direct descent of Merlin eagerly awaited (7)
- 24 8, 22, 7, 23 down, 8, 16 for clemency (5)
- 25 See 9
- Solution tomorrow



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,249

According to his son Sean, John Lennon was "absolutely obsessed" with his figure and constantly on a diet. Similarly preoccupied, Sean is currently following an all-protein regimen to slim down. 'You're not fat,' I tell him truthfully, but he won't be persuaded.

Arts, G2 page 10

Thursday April 16 1998

spacey stage

The p... the O...

inside

Britain

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